



# PAUL KANE

## Life & Work

By Arlene Gehmacher

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# PAUL KANE

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Paul Kane (1810–1871) was a largely self-taught artist known for his paintings of Aboriginal peoples and landscapes, which were based on sketches he made during his travels to the West. Kane produced hundreds of sketches and created a cycle of one hundred paintings that together reveal the vitality of Aboriginal culture and are of great significance today in the study of Canada's Aboriginal and settler cultures.

## FORMATIVE YEARS

Paul Kane was born on September 3, 1810, in Mallow, County Cork, Ireland, the sixth of eight children (four boys, four girls) of Michael Kane (1776–1851) and Frances Loach (1777–1837). Kane was about ten years old when, along with his parents and several siblings, he immigrated to Canada, where they settled in York (Toronto) around 1819. Michael Kane, originally a soldier in the British army, made his living in Canada as a liquor merchant.<sup>1</sup>



LEFT: Paul Kane, *Self-Portrait*, c. 1843–45, oil on canvas, 58 x 62 cm, RiverBrink Art Museum, Queenston, Ontario. Owing to the extensive restoration of this painting, its attribution is currently under investigation. RIGHT: Harriet Clench, c. 1870, photographer unknown. When Paul Kane married Harriet Clench in 1853, she was an accomplished artist and a drawing and painting instructor.

Paul Kane's talent for drawing showed itself early,<sup>2</sup> and as a young adult he may have been mentored by Thomas Drury, the drawing master at Upper Canada College during 1830–33. But by that time Kane was already employed as a commercial artist, first as a furniture decorator (at Wilson S. Conger's factory) and then in 1833 as a "coach, sign, and house-painter."<sup>3</sup> Throughout this period he continued to pursue fine art. In 1834, as an associate of the Society of Artists and Amateurs of Toronto, the first "official" art society in Canada,<sup>4</sup> he exhibited nine works, mostly landscapes. Only two of these were originals; the rest were copies (including a copy of a work by Drury).

In 1834 Kane moved to Cobourg, Ontario, one hundred kilometres east of Toronto. Kane may have worked for furniture maker F.S. Clench, whose daughter Harriet Clench (1823–1892) he would marry in 1853.<sup>5</sup> In Cobourg he also developed his skills as a portraitist, perhaps making connections through Wilson Conger, his former employer, who had resided there since 1829 and had become involved in municipal affairs. Kane painted the local citizenry, including members of the Clench family.





LEFT: Paul Kane, *Portrait of Mrs. Conger of Cobourg*, c. 1834, oil on canvas, 23.6 x 29 cm, RiverBrink Art Museum, Queenston, Ontario. The attribution of the painting is called into question by its uncharacteristic rough brushwork. RIGHT: Paul Kane, *Eliza Clarke Cory Clench*, c. 1834-36, oil on canvas, 71.5 x 56.3 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

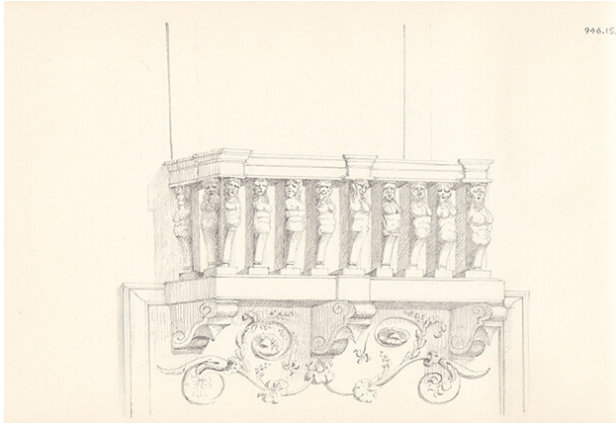
## EUROPEAN GRAND TOUR

For many artists of Kane's generation, it was *de rigueur* to make a pilgrimage to Italy, and especially to Rome, to study the great masterworks. Kane planned to travel with two American friends, James Bowman (1793-1842) and Samuel Bell Waugh (1814-1885), artists who had also exhibited in Toronto in 1834. In 1836 Kane left Cobourg and met up with Bowman in Detroit, but Bowman's recent marriage dashed the artists' immediate plans to travel to Italy.<sup>6</sup>

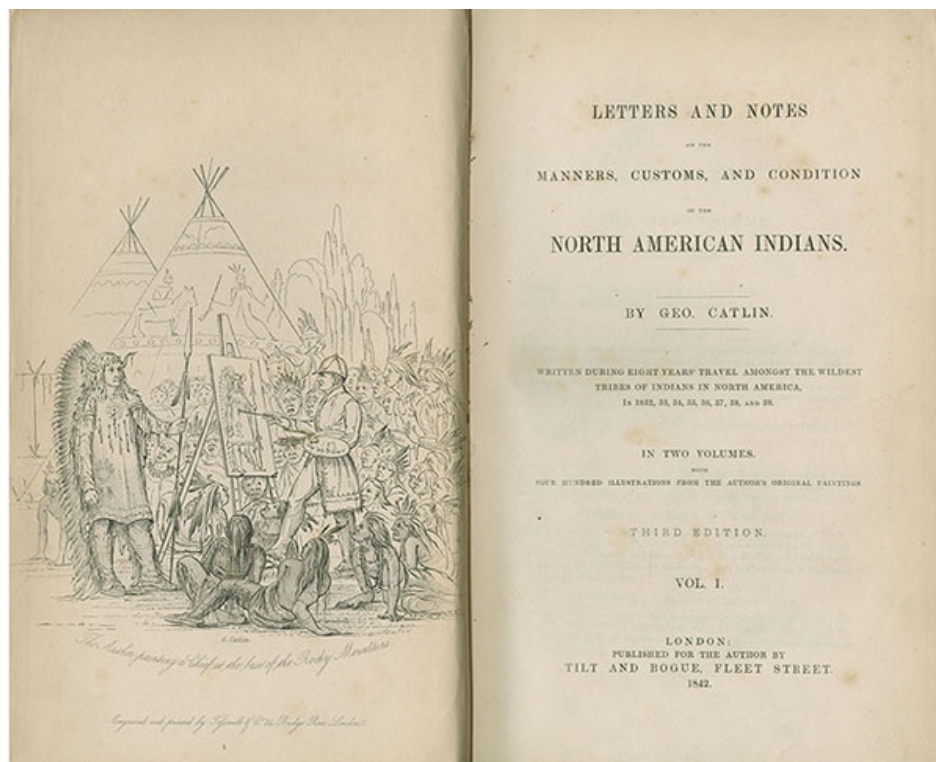
On the advice of his father, Kane remained in North America;<sup>7</sup> he travelled and painted his way through the midwestern and southern United States—Detroit, St. Louis, Mobile, and New Orleans—for the next five years. Finally, in June 1841, Kane sailed for Europe, arriving three months later in Marseilles, France. He headed for Italy immediately; his sketchbooks and passport reveal he spent time in Genoa, Venice, Florence, and Rome. Kane's spirit of adventure inspired him to hike from Rome to Naples. On leaving Italy he also hiked through the Brenner Pass to Switzerland and then travelled to France, passing through Paris on his way to London.<sup>8</sup> Kane's sketchbooks from this period show a range of subject matter—figures, furniture, sculpture, architecture—but his copies of portraits (from the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, for example) indicate that portraiture was Kane's main pursuit.<sup>9</sup>

Despite his study of the masterpieces of Italy and France, it was in London that the stage was set for the ultimate direction of Kane's career. Arriving in late October 1842, Kane may have met the American artist George Catlin (1796-1872) and probably viewed Catlin's Indian Gallery, a showcase of paintings, lectures, and theatrical performances based on the artist's documentation of the Aboriginal peoples of the western United States. Undoubtedly Kane leafed through Catlin's illustrated publication *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indian*.<sup>10</sup> Inspired by Catlin's experiences and his project to "salvage" Aboriginal culture, Kane would soon redirect his own artistic focus.

By early April 1843 Kane was back in the United States where he remained for the next two years, raising money to pay off debts<sup>11</sup> and possibly to pay for a trip to the Northwest. In 1845 he returned to Toronto. Itinerant for almost nine years, Kane had barely set foot at home when, in June, he embarked upon his life project: to create a cycle of large studio paintings documenting the Aboriginal peoples and the landscape of Canada's West.



LEFT: Paul Kane, *Detail of Scroll and Caryatids*, c. 1841, pencil on paper, from Kane's Venice sketchbook. In Venice Kane sketched the canals and the harbour, as well as figures, sculpture, and architectural details such as these. RIGHT: Paul Kane, *Leonardo da Vinci*, c. 1842, oil on wood, 20.7 x 16.8 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. In this early work, Kane copied a portrait of Leonardo in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence, believed in Kane's time to be a self-portrait by the master

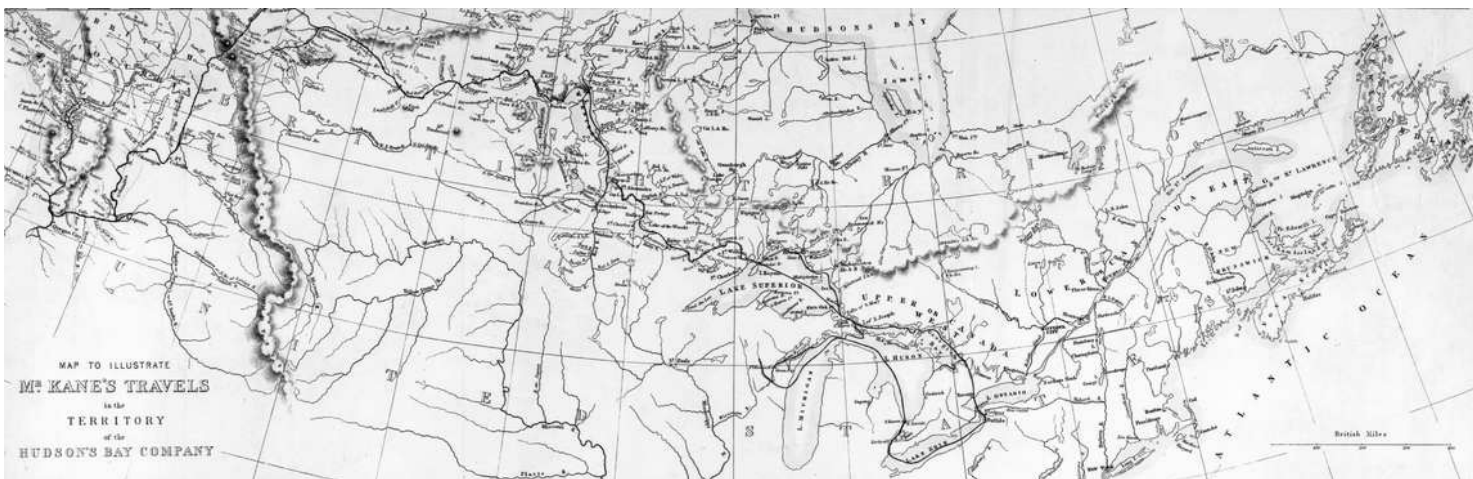


LEFT: George Catlin, c. 1868, photographer unknown. Kane was influenced by the American artist's commitment to "salvage" Aboriginal culture. RIGHT: Title page of George Catlin's *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indian*.



## THE NORTHWEST BECKONS

In embracing his own “salvage” project, Kane was very much in line with the Victorian imperialist belief that North American Aboriginal peoples were all but certain to vanish, threatened by settler contact and encroachment.<sup>12</sup> His first trip, from mid-June to late November 1845, was cut short. He had naively expected that he could travel anywhere without getting permission from the authorities.



Edward Weller and Paul Kane, *Map to Illustrate Mr. Kane's Travels [1845–48] in the Territory of the Hudson's Bay Company*, published in 1859 in Kane's book *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America*.

Kane had travelled and sketched unimpeded through Saugeen territory (on Lake Huron), Georgian Bay, and Manitoulin Island, but at Sault Ste. Marie, as he was poised to enter Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) territory, he was informed by HBC's local chief trader, John Ballenden, that to travel farther would be dangerous without the support of the company's governor, Sir George Simpson. Kane had to complete this particular venture in the Fox River region of the Wisconsin Territory. However, over the winter in Toronto, he began negotiating with Simpson for permission to travel in the Northwest. Ballenden wrote letters to Simpson on Kane's behalf, as did the scientist and colonial administrator John Henry Lefroy, both of whom were familiar with Kane's artwork.



LEFT: Paul Kane, *Maydoc-game-kinungee, "I Hear the Noise of a Deer,"* Ojibway Chief, Michipicoten Island, September 1848, watercolour over pencil on paper, 11.4 x 13.3 cm, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa. This work was listed "no. 81" in Paul Kane's Toronto City Hall exhibition of November 1848. RIGHT: Paul Kane, *François Lucie, A Cree Half-Breed Guide*, c. 1847–48, oil on paper, 27.7 x 22.3 cm, Stark Museum of Art, Orange, Texas.



HBC's approval was critical for Kane's project: it not only granted authorization but also facilitated his next trek. Beginning in late May 1846, he travelled by canoe, York boat, horse, and on foot across prairies, the subarctic, and mountains, with fur-trade brigades or with hired local guides. For over two years Kane travelled along HBC routes, venturing as far north as Fort Assiniboine and as far south as Fort Vancouver in the Oregon Territory, exploring that vicinity and northward on Vancouver Island.

Throughout the trip he encountered the Aboriginal and Metis people who were integral to the success of HBC's commercial endeavours;<sup>13</sup> he took their "likenesses" (in nineteenth-century parlance) as well as sketched their daily life, customs, and cultural artifacts, and the landscape. He sporadically recorded his experiences in a journal and generated hundreds of sketches and studies in pencil, watercolour, and oil. Most of these works were created as he travelled or during periods of residence at HBC posts, but some likely were completed back in Toronto. All of this work was the primary material for his planned cycle of oil paintings to illustrate the life of "the North American Indian." By the time Kane returned to Toronto in October 1848, he had travelled many thousands of miles.

### THE CYCLE TAKES SHAPE

For the next decade Kane was devoted to producing his cycle of one hundred paintings, along with an illustrated account of his travels in the Northwest. He lost no time in promoting his western adventures and artistic labours: within a month of his return in 1848, and with the help of Harriet Clench, Kane organized 240 "sketches of Indians, and Indian Chiefs, Landscapes, Dances, Costumes, &c. &c." for an exhibit held at Toronto City Hall. Included were a number of Aboriginal artifacts acquired by Kane.<sup>14</sup> In the years following his travels he exhibited at various provincial exhibitions in Upper Canada,

showing paintings in the years 1850 to 1857;<sup>15</sup> presented papers at the Canadian Institute (he was a founding member),<sup>16</sup> which were also published in the institute's journals;<sup>17</sup> and received visitors in both home and studio, regaling them with stories of his experiences while showing his sketches and oil paintings.<sup>18</sup> According to one guest who visited in October 1853, Kane's "great ambition" was to "make a perfect collection illustrative of Indian life and



LEFT: Shoulder bag, Cree or Metis, 1840s, cloth, skin, porcupine/bird quills, glass beads, 72.6 x 72 x 17 cm, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. Collected by Paul Kane c. 1846-48 and purchased by his patron, George William Allan, in the early 1850s, this bag is similar to the one worn by the Cree warrior in Kane's *The Death of Omoxesisixany or Big Snake*, 1860. RIGHT: George William Allan, Kane's patron, photographed by William James Topley, Ottawa, February 1881.





to exhibit it in England."<sup>19</sup>

In 1851 Kane petitioned the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada for financial support to execute his grand program of painting; he received just £500 in advance for only twelve prospective oils.<sup>20</sup> His saviour came in the form of George William Allan, a lawyer and municipal politician who, with a substantial inheritance in 1853, became "one of Toronto's most prominent citizens"<sup>21</sup>—and Kane's patron.

Allan paid the artist \$20,000 for one hundred paintings, and the entire lot was delivered to Moss Park, Allan's Toronto mansion, in 1856. Also delivered in 1856 were the twelve paintings commissioned by the Canadian government in 1851—all of which were versions of paintings in Allan's cycle of one hundred.

In many of his endeavours Kane was likely aided by Harriet Clench, whom he married in 1853; she was financially secure and an artist herself. In 1848, two years after receiving artistic instruction at the Burlington Ladies' Academy in Hamilton, she became an assistant instructor in drawing and painting at the same school,<sup>22</sup> and in 1849 she exhibited at the Provincial Exhibition held in Kingston.<sup>23</sup> The Kanes and their four children lived in a house at 56 Wellesley Street East, built the same year they married. The house, which Kane enlarged over time, is still there, a historic site.





Harriet Clench, *A Country Tavern near Cobourg, Canada West*, 1849, oil on canvas, 29.5 x 37.2 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

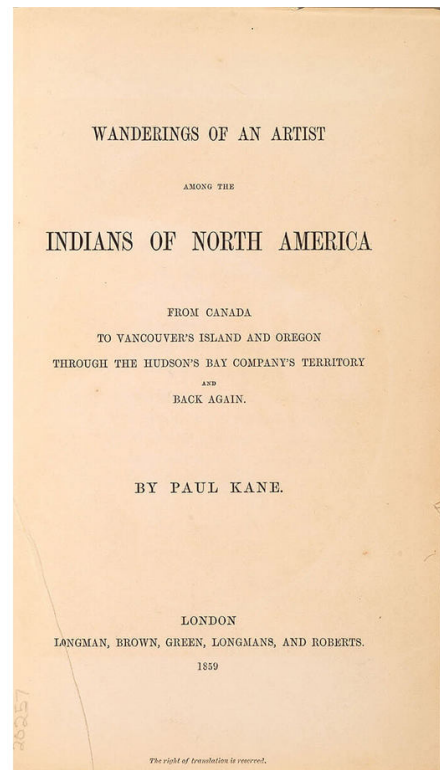
### THE ARTIST AS AUTHOR

A ghostwritten account of Kane's travels based on the artist's journal was published in London in 1859 and dedicated to George W. Allan. Unfortunately, *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America, from Canada to Vancouver's Island and Oregon through the Hudson's Bay Company's Territory and Back Again* was not the grand production that Kane anticipated. He went to London to promote the project and to oversee the lithography of his paintings, but out of his one hundred oil paintings, the book featured only eight chromolithographs and thirteen woodcuts as illustrations. Also, while the book's translation into French, German, and Danish

suggests its popularity in the European market, on the home front its reception was mixed. The Toronto Mechanics' Institute—a centre for adult learning—did not acquire it for its library owing to the apparently prohibitive six-dollar price tag, and one unidentified member of the institute, in a letter to the editor of the *Globe*, referred disparagingly to *Wanderings of an Artist* as "twaddle."<sup>24</sup>

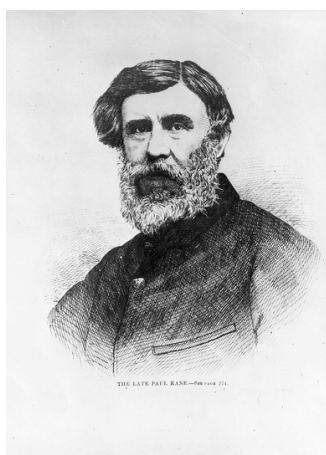


LEFT: Frontispiece of Kane's book *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America* (1859). RIGHT: Title page of Kane's book *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America* (1859).



Kane's artistic output appears to have been curtailed after the publication of *Wanderings of an Artist*. While he retained a studio on King Street East until 1864 and continued to be identified in the Toronto city directory as an artist, his career had plateaued, with little further production. It is believed that Kane's eyesight had started to fail, and there is mention of his having injured his spine in a fall in 1870.<sup>25</sup> He died in Toronto on

February 20, 1871, of a "liver complaint,"<sup>26</sup> which has led to speculation that Kane suffered from alcoholism, but this has not been confirmed. He is buried in St. James Cemetery in Toronto.



LEFT: A newspaper portrait of the late Paul Kane, published in *Canadian Illustrated News*, October 28, 1871. RIGHT: Paul Kane's tombstone in St. James Cemetery, Toronto.



The background image is a painting depicting a bison hunt in a vast, open landscape. In the foreground, a large herd of bison is scattered across a grassy field. Several hunters are visible, some on horseback and some on foot, engaged in the hunt. The middle ground shows rolling hills and a line of evergreen trees. The sky is filled with large, dark, dramatic clouds, with a patch of lighter blue sky visible in the upper left. The overall style is that of a 19th-century oil painting.

# KEY WORKS

This selection of sketches, studies, and oil paintings reveals the trajectory of Paul Kane's career from painter of society portraits to painter of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada, their lands, and customs. The works have been chosen to highlight his technical, aesthetic, and conceptual approaches, including his use of the camera lucida in the field. Many of these works showcase Kane's intentions as well as issues of modern interpretation.



## FREEMAN SCHERMERHORN CLENCH C. 1834–36



Paul Kane, *Freeman Schermerhorn Clench*, c. 1834–36  
Oil on canvas, 71 x 56 cm  
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa



Paul Kane painted this portrait of Freeman Clench as one of a pair, to be hung with the portrait of Freeman's wife, Eliza Clench. These pendant portraits represent Kane's initial plan for earning his living as an artist. They date from his two-year period in Cobourg, Ontario, when he took advantage of social connections to develop his skills in portraiture. He would have known the Clenches either through working for the Clench furniture business or through his contact with Wilson S. Conger, Kane's former employer in Toronto who moved to Cobourg in 1829 and became a prominent citizen through his positions in municipal office.<sup>1</sup>

The paintings portray the Clenches as fashionably dressed, and Eliza's gold locket and earrings are especially indicative of the family's status. Kane's society portraits from this period reflect a professional competence within a naive, linear style. While some sense of the individual sitters is discernible, the elongated necks, enhanced by the fashion of the period, and the patterning of hair and costume mimic a stylization typical of portraiture at the time. The plain background with a broad halo effect behind the head is a focusing device Kane would continue to use throughout his career.

Although neither Clench portrait is signed (typical of Kane), they have been attributed to Kane based on the comparison of the pigments with the contents of his studio paint box,<sup>2</sup> as well as on his close relationship with the Clench family. Both portraits were handed down through the family until their acquisition by the National Gallery of Canada in 1990.



Paul Kane, *Eliza Clarke Cory Clench*, c. 1834-36, oil on canvas, 71.5 x 56.3 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

## PORTRAIT OF JOHN HENRY LEFROY C. 1845–46



Paul Kane, *Scene in the Northwest—Portrait of John Henry Lefroy*, c. 1845–46

Oil on canvas, 55.5 x 76 cm

Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto

*Scene in the Northwest—Portrait of John Henry Lefroy*<sup>1</sup> is unique in Kane's oeuvre in that it embraces portraiture and landscape equally, both key genres for Kane.

The scene depicts John Henry Lefroy, director of the Toronto Magnetic Observatory from 1841 to 1853, who wintered at Lake Athabasca during 1843–44 in his successful search for the magnetic north. In his autobiography Lefroy mentions how he was equipped for the winter with a “warm capote of thick white duffle, trimmed with red, and a blue hood,” and another in grey for his companion Corporal Henry.<sup>2</sup> Lefroy also mentions by name the three-dog team (Papillon, Milord, and Cartouche) that returned him to the Mackenzie River in March 1844 and describes them as having bells and red collars.<sup>3</sup> Only Lefroy would have known the details that appear in this painting, suggesting that he gave Kane art direction for the essential components of the portrait and that Kane's painting of Lefroy in a northern landscape was the scientist's personal commemoration of his achievement.



This portrait, likely painted sometime between December 1845 and April 1846,<sup>4</sup> gives us a glimpse of how Kane may have used his client connections to advance his career. In 1843 Lefroy had solicited approval from Sir George Simpson, governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, for his own trek into the Northwest. In early 1846 Lefroy would in turn write a letter of support to Simpson on Kane's behalf for the artist's request for the same privilege.<sup>5</sup>

When the portrait was first exhibited in 1847 at the Toronto Society of Arts,<sup>6</sup> its title, "Scene in the Northwest—Portrait," focused on the locale rather than the identity of the person. Featuring the "white man" as explorer in Canada's Northwest, the painting showcases a role that Kane was undertaking at that very moment.

## KEE-AKEE-KA-SAA-KA-WOW 1846



Paul Kane, *Kee-akee-ka-saa-ka-wow, "The Man That Gives the War Whoop,"* Plains Cree, Fort Pitt, 1846

Watercolour and graphite on wove paper, 13.5 x 11 cm  
Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa



In his field journal Kane records his encounter with the Cree chief Kee-akee-ka-saa-ka-wow on July 14, 1846, and elaborates that he “is the man that always speekes [speaks], the last” and he “dilliveres [delivers] his ordere in a low tone in his hert [heart].”<sup>1</sup> This watercolour appears to have been executed fairly rapidly, with the chief’s chest and right arm brushed in with a few broad strokes. Kane focuses on the face, noting its variations in structure: the pronounced mouth area, the heavier lower lip, the slack skin of the cheeks as they start sliding into jowls, the lined forehead. Kee-akee-ka-saa-ka-wow’s lower jaw and his shifted glance are visually reinforced by red facial paint.

The comparison between Kane’s watercolour *Kee-akee-ka-saa-ka-wow*, “*The Man That Gives the War Whoop*”<sup>2</sup> and his later oil painting of the same subject is one of the most oft-cited examples of the extent to which Kane modified the essence of a sitter.

In painting the oil, Kane transforms his subject into a man whose expression has been neutralized through elongation and even idealization of the features. Kee-akee-ka-saa-ka-wow, now set against a backdrop of a foreboding sky, looks beyond the viewer. All the accoutrements, all the markers of “Indianness”—the pipe stem, the fringed shirt, the roach headdress—are marshalled to communicate the gravitas that the original watercolour evokes through physiognomy alone.



Paul Kane, *Kee-akee-ka-saa-ka-wow*, Plains Cree, c. 1849–56, oil on canvas, 75.9 x 63.4 cm, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.

## THE BUFFALO POUND C. 1846–49



Paul Kane, *The Buffalo Pound*, c. 1846–49  
 Oil on paperboard, 21.9 x 35 cm  
 Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto

*The Buffalo Pound* speaks as much to issues of patronage as it does to Kane's approach to a subject that was of great interest to him. Kane was enthralled with plains bison, and he would execute a number of paintings based on the theme.

This particular painting, which depicts bison being directed into a corral for slaughter, was one of fourteen produced for Sir George Simpson, governor of the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), who authorized and aided Kane's travel through HBC territory. Simpson intended to display the paintings in a room he was designing as a "museum of Indian curiosities"<sup>1</sup> and seems to have had a vested interest in the images Kane produced for him. Simpson was not shy about directing the artist on subject matter, advising him that the bison should be depicted in profile so as to "give a better idea of the appearance of the animals."<sup>2</sup> Kane obliged, but the side view from a distant, elevated vantage point also allowed the artist to better distill the essential elements of the event into a pictorial narrative: the stampeding herd is funnelled by Aboriginal men (on horseback and foot) along a narrowing lane into a corral in which another man, perched in a tree, "chants an invocation for the success of the undertaking."<sup>3</sup>



Paul Kane, *Buffalo Hunt Studies*, 1846,  
 pencil on paper, 13 x 8 cm, Royal Ontario  
 Museum, Toronto.





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Curiously, Kane's field journal mentions nothing of his witnessing the actual hunt, just the pound containing the aftermath of a previous slaughter. The artist may well have relied on oral accounts of the event. Kane's painting is a composite based on several sketches—of bison, figures, landscape—and a detailed pencil drawing that corresponds closely to this particular version.

## MEDICINE PIPE STEM DANCE 1848



Paul Kane, *Medicine Pipe Stem Dance*, 1848

Oil on paper, 24.8 x 31.1 cm

Stark Museum of Art, Orange, Texas

Previous research has assumed that Kane's works on paper were sketched from life. However, this oil on paper, *Medicine Pipe Stem Dance*, was likely painted by Kane after the event, as a study for the later oil painting. It lacks the immediacy of a sketch drawn from life.



Kane makes no reference in his field journal to the pipe stem dance; if we are to believe his book *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America*, the Blackfoot ceremony took place in the afternoon and included Kane as one of the observers in the circle of seated men. (He was invited to the ceremony, as artist, to “add magical powers in increasing its efficacy.”<sup>1</sup>) The study spotlights the two dancers, and the vantage point is elevated, giving a more expansive view of dancers, spectators, and landscape. Kane’s depiction of the pipe stems suggests they were inspired by his drawings of individual cultural objects rather than by experience. In this painting Kane has chosen to depict a pipe stem from the very enemy nation (Plains Cree) that the Blackfoot were preparing to engage in battle.<sup>2</sup> This seeming inconsistency may well underline Kane’s constructed approach to this work.



Paul Kane, *Medicine Pipe Stem Dance, Blackfoot*, c. 1849-52, oil on canvas, 48.9 x 74.5 cm, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.

The oil painting based on the study was an early creation in Kane’s cycle of one hundred paintings. The canvas was one of eight “Indian pictures” Kane exhibited at the Upper Canada Provincial Exhibition of 1852 in Brockville. One press account includes a lengthy entry on *Medicine Pipe Stem Dance*, referring to the “extracts, which we subjoin from Mr Kane’s journal” as a way to “fully explain the picture and superstitions attached to the ceremonial.”<sup>3</sup> The entry reads like a detailed ethnological explanation, unlike the comparatively brief account in *Wanderings of an Artist*. That Kane did not make even a brief reference in his journal to his invitation to this sacred event, combined with the detailed ethnological description in the press review, suggests that *Medicine Pipe Stem Dance* (both the study and the oil painting) may rely more on descriptions that Kane read than on his own experience.

## FLAT HEAD WOMAN AND CHILD C. 1849–52



Paul Kane, *Flat Head Woman and Child*, Caw-wacham, Cowlitz, c. 1849-52  
Oil on canvas, 75.9 x 63.4 cm  
Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto

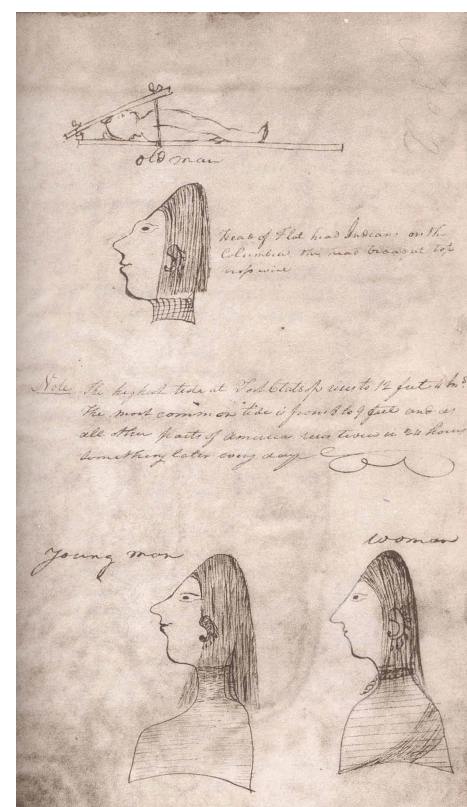


*Flat Head Woman and Child*, *Caw-wacham* was one of Kane's best-known paintings in his day and has proven to be one of his most controversial works. It depicts a woman with an infant whose head is being reshaped; the woman's own profile highlights the result of the traditional procedure. The image, inspired by Kane's encounter with the Aboriginal peoples of the Columbia River Valley, is a composite based on separate watercolours of members of two or three different tribes: one Cowlitz (the infant) and the other Songhees or Southern Coast Salish (the woman).<sup>1</sup> Kane makes no mention of the reshaping process in his field journal, but it is featured in his book *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America*, including the explanation that the "flat" head is a "distinguishing mark of freedom."<sup>2</sup>

For all the attention and controversy the painting has engendered, it is ironic that Kane depicts the flattening board in the "up" position rather than actually pressuring the child's skull, as was depicted in more documentary renderings of the procedure, such as a sketch from 1806 by William Clark (1770-1838) of a child in the process of having its head flattened.

Nineteenth-century responses to *Flat Head Woman and Child* addressed both aesthetic and ethnographic aspects. When Kane exhibited the painting (titled simply "Sketch of a Chinook") in the portrait category at the 1852 Upper Canada Provincial Exhibition, it was appreciated as much for the colour of its background landscape as it was as a "trait of Indian customs."<sup>3</sup> Yet interest in its ethnographic references prevailed. The painting no doubt was on display at the Canadian Institute's March 1855 meeting featuring a reading of Kane's paper "The Chinook Indians," which included a description of the reshaping procedure. The reading was complemented by a display of Chinook cultural objects, a skull, and "several admirable oil paintings, executed by Mr. Kane."<sup>4</sup> *Flat Head Woman and Child* was also the inspiration for an image created by Kane's friend Daniel Wilson (1816-1892), who reviewed his book *Wanderings of an Artist*.<sup>5</sup> Wilson made his own composite image for the frontispiece to his book *Prehistoric Man*<sup>6</sup> using the same watercolour sketch of a Cowlitz infant and another by Kane of a Clallam woman weaving a basket.<sup>7</sup>

Modern commentary is more critical in tone. The art historian Heather Dawkins has approached *Flat Head Woman and Child*, from a post-colonial perspective, taking Kane to task for his Victorian imperialist viewpoint evident in his disregard for tribal distinctions.<sup>8</sup> And, given that Kane painted this "mother and child" theme at a time when Western culture was showing an increased respect toward children, she questions Kane's motives in depicting this particular Aboriginal custom. Was he simply romanticizing Aboriginal life, or was he intentionally criticizing Aboriginal culture?



William Clark, *Heads of Clatsop Indians*, from *Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 1804-1806* (1905). Clark's drawing shows a child in process of having its head flattened, an old man, a young man, and a woman with shaped heads.

## THE CACKABAKAH FALLS C. 1849–56



Paul Kane, *The Cackabakah Falls*, c. 1849–56  
Oil on canvas, 51 x 71 cm  
Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto

*The Cackabakah Falls*<sup>1</sup> is a superb example of Kane's embrace of the sublime. In portraying Kakabeka Falls, the artist has chosen as his subject one of the natural wonders along the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) voyageur route. His depiction of these falls as a fearsome force of nature is intended to inspire and overwhelm the viewer, while the foreground wedge of land offers a stable view at a safe distance.

Kane was but a passenger when travelling with the HBC brigades, and while the men portaged, he would sketch. In executing his earlier drawing of this particular view, *Kakabeka Falls*, 1846, Kane appears to have been aided by an optical instrument. The precise articulation of outline and details of the "tower" in the middle, and the heavier pencil tracing the foliage and rocks in the foreground, suggest Kane used a device called a camera lucida.



In translating his linear rendition into an oil painting, Kane created a spectacular vision of the sublime. Light glances off the massive sheets of falling water, reflects off the horizontal striations of the chert<sup>2</sup> rock, and vies with the storm cloud for supremacy. The diminutive Aboriginal figures on the riverbank are a typical Romantic device used to provide scale and emphasize the immensity of this natural wonder—and, by projection, Kane's own experience.

Kane makes no mention of the falls by name in his field journal, nor does he indicate his response to the view; he simply notes that he made sketches of two portages along this leg of his journey.<sup>3</sup> It is as though Kane relies on his drawing to accurately record his experience and his painting to emotionally express it.



Fig. 476. — Dessin à la chambre claire.

An illustration of an artist using a camera lucida, from the *Dictionnaire encyclopédique et biographique de l'industrie et des arts industriels* (1882).

## FORT EDMONTON C. 1849–56



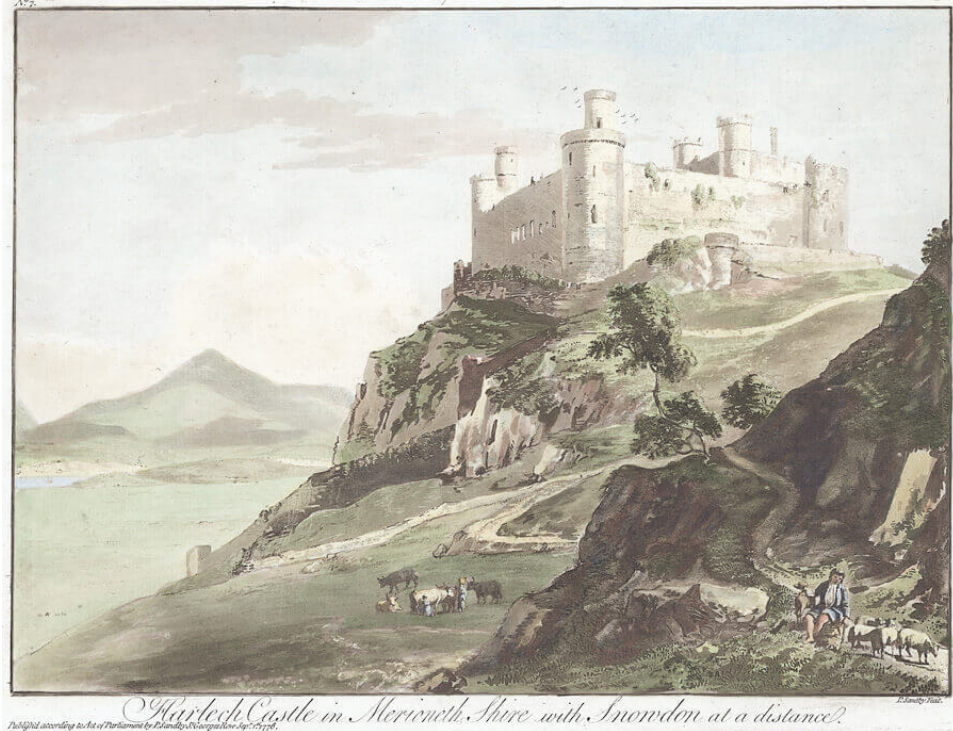
Paul Kane, *Fort Edmonton, Hudson's Bay Company; Plains Cree, Assiniboine*, c. 1849–56  
Oil on canvas, 43 x 71 cm  
Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto

If Kane's documentary impulses were satisfied by drawing from nature freely, or by using a camera lucida, the popularity of the picturesque would nevertheless have encouraged him to approach and view the empirical world in a certain way. *Fort Edmonton* demonstrates Kane's use of the picturesque style in which elevated viewpoints and sinuous land formations allow the viewer to "travel" through the image.

Although Kane spent extended periods at Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) posts, there are no pictorial records of the interior of the forts. As the art historian J. Russell Harper notes, the artist's panoramic views of the company's presence in the landscape reinforce the sense of its empire.<sup>1</sup> With its palisades and corner towers, and its situation on a promontory overlooking the North Saskatchewan River, Fort Edmonton must have seemed to Kane the New World equivalent to an Old World castle such as Harlech in North Wales, which is similarly situated on a rock overlooking water. Kane in his early days had copied a print (as yet unidentified) of Harlech Castle.<sup>2</sup>



Kane made two pencil sketches of the fort as seen from a distance: one from the southeast<sup>3</sup> and one from the south.<sup>4</sup> For this oil painting, Kane chose the view from the south, in which the fort is approached by a path running alongside the river. Here Kane was confronted by a scene with two parallel foci: the river extending into the distance on the left and the path culminating in the fort on the right. Kane's challenge was to resolve the split focus into a picturesque view. This he did by incorporating clouds into the upper left quadrant to create a sweeping "S" that moves the viewer's eye across the foreground, onto the promontory, creating contact with the horizon and into the sky and distance.



Paul Sandby, *Harlech Castle in Merioneth Shire with Snowdon at a Distance*, 1776, etching and aquatint in sanguine on ivory laid paper, 23.9 x 31.5 cm (plate); 32 x 46.3 cm (sheet), National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth. Sandby (1731–1809) was a well-known practitioner of the picturesque style in England.

Current understandings of the picturesque often situate it within the framework of an imperialist ideology.<sup>5</sup> If *Fort Edmonton* is looked at through this lens, then Kane's recognition of the economic relationship between empire and colony can also be seen in his inclusion of the fort, the teepees, and the river that was so important to the fur trade—elements included in both his sketches and his preparatory drawings.<sup>6</sup>

## CUNNAWA-BUM C. 1849–56

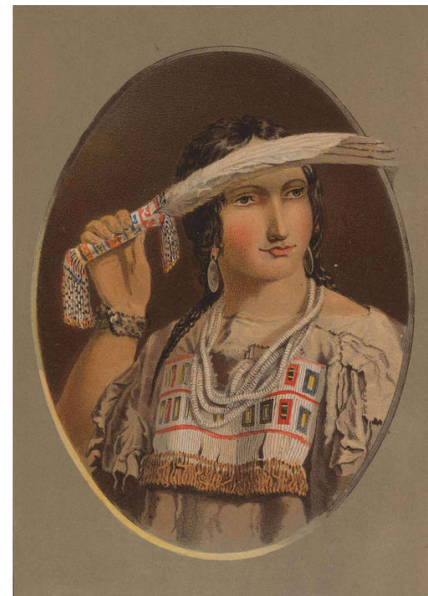
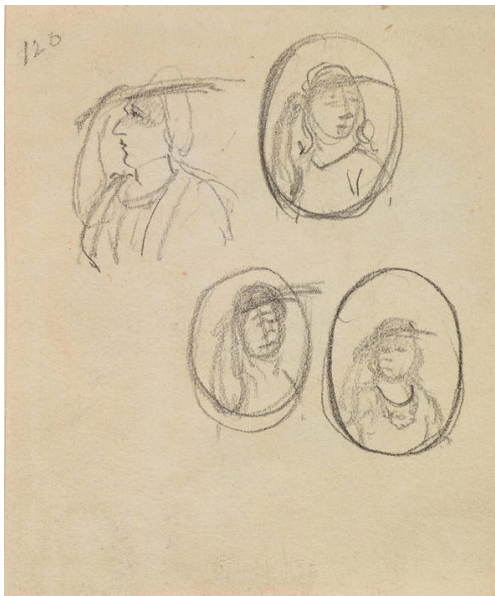


Paul Kane, *Cunnawa-bum*, Metis (Plains Cree and British ancestry), c. 1849–56  
Oil on canvas, 64.2 x 51.5 cm  
Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto



Out of the cycle of one hundred paintings that Kane created, it is this one, *Cunnawa-bum*, that is used as the frontispiece in his book *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America*. Although the image of the young Metis woman of Plains Cree and British ancestry<sup>1</sup> featured in the book is only one of numerous portraits in the painted cycle, as frontispiece she becomes a sort of cover girl for Kane's life project. *Wanderings of an Artist* recounts how the young woman, whom Kane met at Fort Edmonton, held her swan's-wing fan "in a most coquettish manner"<sup>2</sup> and that it was her charm that inspired Kane.

No preliminary portrait sketch or drawing exists of *Cunnawa-bum*. Kane developed his general concept for a fan portrait through several schematic drawings of a figure holding a fan, sometimes within an oval. One of these drawings is a profile of a "flathead" woman; none are articulated with features that suggest an individual. In the painting the awkwardly disembodied arm implicitly suggests that Kane's focus was the beguiling fan, underlined by its *trompe l'oeil* nudge into the viewer's space.



LEFT: Paul Kane, *Compositional Studies of Four Figures with Fans*, c. 1846-48, graphite on wove paper, 11.2 x 9.4 cm, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. RIGHT: Paul Kane, *Portrait of a Half-Breed Cree Girl*, 1859, chromolithograph, frontispiece to Kane's book *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America* (1859).

This strangely generic aspect of the portrait, despite its connection to an individual, is carried over into its life as the chromolithograph frontispiece to *Wanderings of an Artist* where its title becomes the anonymous *Portrait of a Half-Breed Cree Girl*. According to the ethnologist Daniel Wilson (1816-1892), a friend of Kane's who reviewed *Wanderings of an Artist*, the oil captures the racial duality of the sitter; Wilson writes that Kane's painting "presents an exceedingly interesting illustration of the blending of the white and Indian features in the female Half-breed." Wilson is criticizing the work of the chromolithographer, Vincent Brooks, who had "sacrificed every trace of Indian features in his desire to produce his own ideal of a pretty face, such as might equally well have been copied for an ordinary wax doll."<sup>3</sup>

For the artist, ethnographer, and lithographer, respectively, the essence of Cunnawa-bum's charm was presented as a fan, in her identity as a half-breed, and as a wax doll. It is perhaps in Cunnawa-bum's best interest that modern viewers shift the focus to the meaning of her name—"One That Looks at the Stars"—as a way to subvert the nineteenth-century male gaze and recognize her as empowered.

## THE CONSTANT SKY C. 1849–56



Paul Kane, *The Constant Sky*, Saulteaux, c. 1849-56  
Oil on canvas, 63.5 x 76.2 cm  
Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto

*The Constant Sky* projects the quintessential Romantic ideal that equates pristine nature with "primitive man."<sup>1</sup> An Aboriginal woman, The Constant Sky, sitting on an animal skin, leans against a tree trunk, her child by her side. The massive tree, with its intertwining branches, vines, and protective leaf canopy, suggests an ancient and unspoiled landscape. It is an idyllic locale, where a mirror-like river and the modest waterfall suggest the calm and comforting sounds of nature that reassure The Constant Sky of her way of life. For all the assumptions made during Kane's time about the Aboriginal people being a "vanishing race," one wonders if Kane's image is meant to be an affirmation of the permanence of the Aboriginal presence. Seen from a nineteenth-century perspective, the early morning light in this painting alludes to the future, underscoring the idea of continuity that is implicit in both the woman's name and the presence of the child.





# PAUL KANE

Life & Work by Arlene Gehmacher

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Kane may have drawn on several different personal experiences to create this painting; he apparently relied on sketches of landscapes, figures, and cultural objects from different regions and tribes.<sup>2</sup> Ultimately Kane's random borrowing from his own field sketches is moot, as his goal was to transcend the particular and capture an essential moral truth. Kane's Arcadian landscape, framed by a painted, decorative arch of gold, offers a meditation on the ideal communion between humankind and nature, which at the time was thought to be manifest in the lives of the Aboriginal people.

## THE DEATH OF OMOXESISIXANY 1860



Paul Kane, *The Death of Omoxisisixany or Big Snake*, 1860  
Chromolithograph in seventeen colours, embossed and printed on wove paper,  
37.5 x 46.3 cm  
Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto

*The Death of Omoxisisixany or Big Snake* is a chromolithograph after Paul Kane's painting of the same title, the only Kane painting to be mass-produced and marketed as a stand-alone print for framing.<sup>1</sup> It was printed and published in Toronto in 1860 and no doubt underwritten by his patron, George William Allan. The subject matter was likely chosen by Allan, who seems to have considered the original painting one of Kane's best, and its treatment points to an assumption of the urban audience's interest in theatrical "exoticism."



The subject is the death of the Blackfoot chief at the hands of a Cree warrior, an event Kane imagined, based on hearsay.<sup>2</sup> There are no known preparatory drawings, but the brown horse's headstall and the Cree warrior's shoulder bag depicted in the image were inspired by items Kane had collected.<sup>3</sup> One can imagine Kane in his studio, relying both on reproductions of European paintings—such as *The Start of the Race of the Riderless Horses*, c. 1820, by Horace Vernet (1789–1863)—and on his own collection of Aboriginal artifacts to create this striking painting of Canadian history.

The chromolithograph is remarkable for the degree to which it corresponds to the original painting in spatial relationships and in detail. It is doubtful, however, that Kane himself was actively involved in the lithographic process. The printers have been identified as Charles Fuller and Hermann Bencke, a Prussian immigrant. Fuller and Bencke's superb workmanship is evident both in the embossed surface that creates texture and depth and in the extensive number of colours used; as a testament to this workmanship, the chromolithograph has been used as a reliable reference for the conservation of the original painting.



Horace Vernet, *The Start of the Race of the Riderless Horses*, c. 1820, oil on canvas, 46 x 54 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Kane relied on prints of European paintings such as this.





# SIGNIFICANCE & CRITICAL ISSUES

Paul Kane's legacy is found in the images he created that were based on his travels through Canada's West, complemented by his travelogue *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America*. The range and importance of his field sketches and oil paintings of Aboriginal peoples, their culture, and lands are undeniable. However, this legacy has been understood and appreciated by ethnographers, historians, art historians, and literary critics in remarkably different ways.



### ILLUSTRATING AN UNKNOWN COUNTRY

Kane was the first and only artist in Canada to embark upon a pictorial and literary project featuring the country's Aboriginal peoples, using the medium of portraiture in a time before the dominance of photography. Kane was working within a model initiated by Swiss artist Karl Bodmer (1809–1893) and American artist George Catlin (1796–1872) and adopted by Americans such as Alfred Jacob Miller (1810–1874), John Mix Stanley (1814–1872), and Seth Eastman (1808–1875), all of whose public profiles were enhanced through exhibition and publication.



LEFT: Karl Bodmer, *Wahk-ta-Ge-Li, a Sioux Warrior*, 1844, aquatint on paper, 44 x 55.4 cm, private collection. Bodmer accompanied the German explorer Prince Maximilian of Wied on his travels through the American West, contributing illustrations to Maximilian's *Travels in the Interior of North America* (1843). RIGHT: John Mix Stanley, *Buffalo Hunt on the Southwestern Prairies*, 1845, oil on canvas, 102.9 x 154.3 cm, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.

Kane's objective, according to the preface of his book *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America*, was to "sketch pictures of the principal chiefs, and their original costumes, to illustrate their manners and customs, and to represent the scenery of an almost unknown country."<sup>1</sup> It was a challenge to which he rose, despite the numerous obstacles, such as cultural differences, harsh terrain, and the difficulty of obtaining patronage. During his travels Kane encountered over thirty different tribes, and he painted their vibrant cultural traditions as well as individual portraits.

Kane's legacy, which documents a unique aspect of Canadian history, is threefold: the hundreds of sketches and drawings; the ensuing cycle of one hundred studio paintings; and the journal he wrote, with its subsequent incarnation as an illustrated book. The works he produced reflect the prevailing attitudes toward Aboriginal peoples held by white society in the mid-nineteenth century. The oil paintings were particularly compelling in the artist's day because they reinforced the trope of the "noble savage," a stereotype that was a product of the Western world's Romantic vision of indigenous people and their ancestral lands, which had been colonized by Europe. *Wanderings of an Artist* likewise reinforced this



Paul Kane, *Head Chief of the Assiniboines (Portrait of Mah-min)*, Assiniboine, c. 1849–56, oil on canvas, 76.3 x 63.9 cm, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.

attitude. By today's sensibilities it is the hundreds of sketches that Kane produced that are most compelling. Regarded as fresh and immediate, the sketches are valued as bearers of authenticity, created by an eyewitness with a fine talent for capturing the subject matter before him.

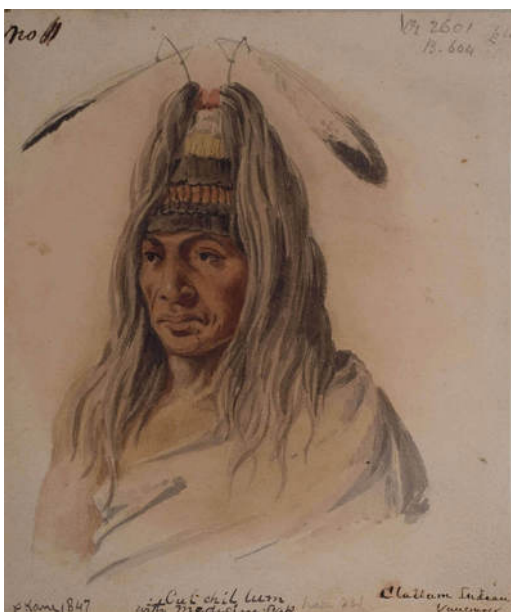
### THE SALVAGE PARADIGM

Kane's mission to record the life of Aboriginal peoples of the Northwest has all the hallmarks of what later became known as the salvage paradigm in which a dominant society attempting to save through documentation the culture of another that it considers to be at risk of vanishing.<sup>2</sup> This motivation is particularly clear in George Catlin's Indian Gallery project, created in direct response to the U.S. government's agenda to remove the Aboriginal people to reservations. Although Canadian policy was less overt, this idea did have currency in Canada and was mentioned in 1852 in the context of an exhibit of Kane's paintings.<sup>3</sup> Kane's attitude seems to have supported the salvage imperative as he accepted the inevitability of the Aboriginal peoples' demise caused by the relentless encroachment of Western civilization.



George Catlin's Indian Gallery paintings installed alongside Native American dioramas, at the United States National Museum, Washington, D.C., c. 1901.

Yet a conundrum lies at the heart of Kane's work. Contemporary critical analysis pegs Kane as an appropriator who profited from picturing the lives of disempowered indigenous peoples, and even as a racist who failed to adequately respect the cultures he encountered and portrayed. However, Kane did make copious detailed and accomplished renderings of individuals and their thriving and vital culture. His work has no photographic parallel, for no one had yet turned a camera on the prairies and beyond. Kane thus built an enduring and valuable primary visual record of a culture that we otherwise would not have.



LEFT: Paul Kane, *Culchillum Wearing a Medicine Cap*, April-June 1847, watercolour on paper, 12.3 x 11.4 cm, Stark Museum of Art, Orange, Texas. RIGHT: Paul Kane, *Scalp Dance, Colville*, Colville (Interior Salish), c. 1849-56, oil on canvas, 47.9 x 73.7 cm, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.



### FIELD SKETCHES AND STUDIO PAINTINGS

During his travels Kane generated a great quantity of pictorial material—his field sketches. Once he was back in his Toronto studio, these sketches were essential as he developed his cycle of one hundred oil paintings on canvas.



LEFT: Paul Kane, *Encampment with Conical Shaped Lodges and Canoe*, mid-July 1845, graphite on paper, 13.7 x 21.5 cm, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. Field sketches such as this formed the basis for Kane's oil paintings. RIGHT: Paul Kane, *Indian Encampment on Lake Huron*, c. 1845, oil on canvas, 48.3 x 73.7 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

The fieldwork and the studio paintings are often treated as discrete categories within the artist's "Indian project." Historically the oil paintings have had a high public profile: the set of one hundred was exhibited in 1904 and was acquired by the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, in 1912. By virtue of their relatively stable medium, the oil paintings have been on display more often than the sketches. The majority of the sketches remained in private hands for over a century, with the exception of one significant group acquired by the ROM in 1946. As works on paper, the sketches are more vulnerable to light degradation and for conservation reasons have been kept in protective storage for extended periods even when they are held by a public institution.<sup>4</sup>

The sketches were generally assumed to have been executed on the spot or, if not directly from life, then close in time and location to their subject—the artist's goal being to produce an accurate likeness. They have been of particular interest to ethnographers, who assume Kane engaged in dispassionate observation.<sup>5</sup> Art historians view the sketches as fresh and vibrant in comparison to the more laboured and contrived studio paintings. This dual perspective has helped to determine Kane's creative process and his place within the spectrum of visual culture in Canada. Yet to be addressed by either group of researchers are the differences and nuances in approach, production, and function of various types of sketches; some of them may not be fieldwork at all but rather preparatory studio studies. Additional research will lead to a better understanding of the development of Kane's cycle of paintings.



LEFT: Paul Kane, *Flat Head Woman and Child*, Caw-wacham, Cowlitz, c. 1849-52, oil on canvas, 75.9 x 63.4 cm, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. This painting draws on watercolours of two or three different tribes: one Cowlitz (the infant) and the other Songhees or Southern Coast Salish (the woman). RIGHT: Paul Kane, *Nesperces Indian*, Nez Perce, c. 1849-56, oil on canvas, 64.2 x 51.2 cm, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. The pierced nose is an anachronism.

The oil paintings, while based on the sketches, have been recognized by all as unabashedly romanticized images: the landscapes are painted in the tradition of the sublime, and some of Kane's human subjects are transformed into the "noble savage," whether through modifications to stance, clothing, or accoutrements or through additions of mood-evocative backgrounds.<sup>6</sup> Some of the paintings, as noted in current ethnological commentary, show blatant ethnographic inaccuracies. Kane's romanticization of his subjects may be a result of his need to fulfill the stylistic expectations of his client, or it might simply indicate how Kane was a painter of his time. To date, Kane's reputation has not been affected by the changing evaluation of his artistic strengths or the perceived shortcomings of his works.

### QUESTIONS OF AUTHORSHIP

The book *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America*, based on Kane's field journal, was published in 1859. A venture inspired by George Catlin's earlier publication, this fleshed-out account of Kane's travels was in the making at least as early as 1852, when an exhibit review quotes at length from "Kane's journal."<sup>7</sup> *Wanderings of an Artist* is a hybrid, a travelogue that includes detailed ethnographic descriptions as well as accounts of events not directly experienced by the artist. It is illustrated with twenty-one images, much fewer than Kane had hoped for and far shy of the hundreds of sketches and paintings he made. The eight chromolithographs and thirteen woodcut engravings are based on Kane's paintings, sketches, or combinations of these.

*Wanderings of an Artist* is known to have been ghostwritten.<sup>8</sup> Comparisons between the field journal and the published book reveal significant differences in diverse aspects such as content, spelling, and length of text. The text's anachronistic telling of events belies the authenticity of the author's experience and highlights the constructed nature of the book's contents. Moreover, the book's overt imperialist sensibility—so different from the neutral language and expression found in Kane's journal—suggests a much different voice from that of Kane.



LEFT: Paul Kane, *White Mud Portage*, 1859, chromolithograph from Kane's book *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America* (1859). RIGHT: Paul Kane, *Encampment amongst the Islands of Lake Huron*, 1859, woodcut engraving from Kane's book *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America* (1859).



To what extent then can *Wanderings of an Artist* be used as a framework in which to assess Kane's cultural attitudes and his oeuvre? Do we consider Kane complicit in its overt imperialist discourse, if only by association? Or is the ghostwriter's voice so dominant that we should consider Kane's artwork distinct from the text of the publication? To date, analysis of Kane has taken a middle ground, by assuming that his pictorial oeuvre—his preliminary works and finished paintings—was the tangible basis if not for the entire text then for a significant part of it. This gives the text some credibility despite its huge departures from Kane's original journal.



### THE MYSTERY OF THE COPIES

The set of one hundred oils on canvas executed for Kane's patron, George W. Allan, and delivered in 1856, is considered the core of Kane's painted output. However, additional versions of some of the paintings exist—in most cases just one copy but in some cases two or even three.



LEFT: Paul Kane, *Assiniboine Hunting Buffalo*, c. 1851-56, oil on canvas, 46 x 73.7 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. RIGHT: Paul Kane, *Running Buffalo*, Assiniboine, c. 1849-56, oil on canvas, 45.4 x 74.2 cm, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. Duplicate paintings such as these are being analyzed by ROM curator Ken Lister and paintings conservator Heidi Sobol.

We know that Kane was under immense pressure to honour the contract for twelve paintings commissioned by Canada's colonial government. It may be that the threat of a lawsuit for non-compliance compelled Kane to simply duplicate subjects under the pressure of time. But how do we explain triplicate versions of a single image, such as with *Running Buffalo*, c. 1849-56, *Assiniboine Hunting Buffalo*, c. 1851-56, and *Assiniboine Running Buffalo*, c. 1849-56?<sup>9</sup> And how should we think about the duplicate renderings of works outside of the twelve? (For example, *A Sketch on Lake Huron*, 1849-52, and *Indian Encampment on Lake Huron*, c. 1845; or *Flat Head Woman and Child*, Caw-wacham, c. 1849-52, and *Caw-wacham, Flat Head Mother and Child*, c. 1848-53.)

In the book *The First Brush: Paul Kane & Infrared Reflectography* (2014), Royal Ontario Museum curator and anthropologist Ken Lister and ROM paintings conservator Heidi Sobol present their research on Kane's paintings using current scientific methods. They are particularly interested in investigating instances of multiple versions to establish which painting is the original, and in analyzing Kane's technique and execution to better understand the development of a painting's content.





# STYLE & TECHNIQUE

Paul Kane's career spanned more than twenty years, during which his artistic vision was focused on subject matter rather than technical development. It is the subject matter of his work that has guaranteed his place in Canada's art history. Kane wrote nothing about his aesthetic beliefs or technique, and there is no indication that he reflected theoretically on his artmaking. Information about his technique and style resides mainly in the artworks he produced.



### EARLY YEARS

Aside from his presumed early private tutelage with Thomas Drury, the drawing master at Upper Canada College, Kane's study of art was largely self-directed. His two main modes of learning were by copying prints and paintings, and by drawing from nature. Copying painted portraits by European masters figured largely in his development, not surprising since Kane embraced portraiture as his primary source of artistic income. But his copy work also included landscapes, and given Kane's later original production, one can assume his early models were the picturesque and the sublime.<sup>1</sup> His studies from nature included some life drawing (though never nudes) and landscapes, and he also depicted sculpture, furniture, and architecture.



Paul Kane's studio sketch box, used between 1820 and 1860.

Ultimately Kane's focus as an artist was on Aboriginal culture: the individuals, their customs, and the landscape of the territories where they lived. He intended to create a cycle of large studio paintings documenting the peoples and the landscape of Canada's West. By the time he embarked on his mission, the three pillars of his technique and artistic approach were in place: the observation of nature, the aesthetic of the picturesque, and the conceptual conventions of Romanticism. All three approaches informed not only his finished oil paintings but also his sketches, though the sketches were primarily practical.

### ROMANTICISM

If one overarching descriptor were attached to Kane's approach, it would have to be Romantic. However, given that Kane left no words on his personal theory of artmaking, it is difficult to ascertain the exact nature of his approach. Is the Romanticism evident in his cycle of finished oil paintings, and to a lesser extent in his field sketches, indicative of a conscious desire to portray a "vanishing race" in a way that would satisfy the aesthetic expectations of his prospective patrons? Or was it simply the result of his exposure to the Romantic style through his European travels and the widely available engraved or lithographic reproductions of the time?



LEFT: Théodore Géricault, *An Officer of the Chasseurs Commanding a Charge*, 1812, oil on canvas, 349 x 266 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris. Kane was influenced by European paintings, which circulated as prints. RIGHT: Paul Kane, *The Man That Always Rides*, Blackfoot, c. 1849-56, oil on canvas, 46.3 x 60.9 cm, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.

Kane's Romanticism is most pronounced in his oils on canvas, such as *A Prairie on Fire*, c. 1849-56. Many of the oils embody conventions of Romantic painting: the tableau-like, staged compositions; the dramatic, moody skies; the diffuse, murky tonalities; the spectacular light effects (generated by natural phenomena, either witnessed or imagined by Kane); the sublime or picturesque views; and the idealization of the individuals who were his subjects.



LEFT: Paul Kane, *Six Black Feet Chiefs*, Blackfoot, c. 1849-55, oil on canvas, 65.5 x 78.5 cm, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. RIGHT: Paul Kane, *A Prairie on Fire*, c. 1849-56, oil on canvas, 45.8 x 74 cm, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. Kane's Romanticism is evident in these two paintings.

Conceptually Romanticism is most notable in Kane's choice of subject: Aboriginal life, as embodied in the "exotic," the "primitive," and the relationship of both to nature. While the pictorial effects of the finished works speak to the artist's feelings of loss and drama—as can be seen in *The Man That Always Rides*, c. 1849-56—Kane's attempts to immortalize his Aboriginal subjects in a heroic mode have the paradoxical effect of erasing the artistic empathy that is evident in the subjects' vitality and character in the original



sketches. Yet these pictorial effects are essential to Kane's work. They function as mechanisms that create a distance between the painted subject and the urban viewer. Romanticism, it can be argued, allowed its intended audience to experience an objective, voyeuristic fascination with the exoticism of "Indians" and their way of life without feeling any personal connection that might raise questions about the white man's role in their predicted disappearance. This notion is evident in works such as Kane's *The Constant Sky*, c. 1849-56.

### PRELIMINARY WORKS

Kane approached his program methodically by following the processes advocated by the European academies of art. Oil paintings were based on sketches and pictorial concepts either drawn from life or developed in the studio. Most of them are on paper, which is not unusual; paper is also especially well suited for transport.<sup>2</sup>

These works vary in medium, approach, and function. Whether they were executed in graphite, watercolour, oil, or some combination thereof, Kane drew either loosely and rapidly or with careful attention to detail, depending on what circumstances allowed and what the impetus was for a particular sketch. Since conditions in the field were unlikely to have been optimal, some of the "life drawings" were probably done after the fact—for instance, in a makeshift studio at the local Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) post while he waited for travel to resume.

This extent of Kane's preparation is evident in his various images of the lower Pelouse Falls, a site he visited in July 1847 and noted in his journal. In *Lower Falls on the Pelouse River*, 1847, Kane offers a highly articulated view in graphite and watercolour, his vantage point being a short distance up the northwest bank of the river, allowing for a focus on the waterfall and the spectacular craggy rock formation.<sup>3</sup> The judiciously applied watercolour suggests the colours found in nature.



Paul Kane, *Lower Falls on the Pelouse River*, 1847, watercolour and graphite on paper, 14 x 23.5 cm, Stark Museum of Art, Orange, Texas.

*Falls of Pelouse*, 1847, reveals that Kane ascended the bank that offered a sweeping view east, beyond the falls to a distant mountain range. Working in graphite only, Kane gives but general lines of the various elements of the landscape, as if he were trying to assess the compositional potential of this particular vantage point. However, it is his detailed drawing (with its hints of watercolour) that is obviously the basis for his highly worked-up oil-on-paper rendition, *Lower Falls on the Pelouse River*. The latter, possibly intended as both a finished work and the model for his large oil on canvas,<sup>4</sup> would have unquestionably been painted in his studio rather than *en plein air*.



Paul Kane, *Lower Falls on the Pelouse River*, 1847, watercolour and graphite on paper, 14 x 23.5 cm, Stark Museum of Art, Orange, Texas.

### SKETCHES AND THE CAMERA LUCIDA

The disparity in perspective among Kane's drawings is striking.

Pictorial hints within some of his more accurately rendered drawings strongly suggest that for these he used a camera lucida, an optical instrument much favoured by artists since its invention in the early nineteenth century. It was often carried on expeditions to document the topography of a landscape (usually geological formations) and its inhabitants, in preparation for lithographic illustrations in exploration

publications.<sup>5</sup> Small and portable, the camera lucida is essentially a prism atop an extendable stem.

The artist chooses a subject or scene, views it through the prism, and simultaneously sees an image of the actual scene projected onto a sheet of paper below; the adjustable stem makes the subject larger or smaller. Once the subject is decided upon, the artist can "frame" it within the sheet, trace the lines, and shade in tonalities as desired.<sup>6</sup>



An illustration of the camera lucida, from George Dollond's *Description of the Camera Lucida: An Instrument for Drawing in True Perspective, and for Copying, Reducing, or Enlarging Other Drawings* (1830).



*Lower Falls on the Pelouse River* is suggestive of the use of a camera lucida. Kane records the general broader masses of the landscape but also highlights the lines to articulate a detailed sense of the geological forms and stratifications. The pressured notational marks that articulate the strata of the rock face function as register marks, ensuring Kane could properly realign the view and projected image should he have inadvertently shifted focus. The marks also functioned as a way for Kane to showcase essential elements of the landscape.

### TRUTH AND ACCURACY

Kane embraced the idea that his work be perceived as “truthful” and “accurate.” Imitating the successful strategy of the American artist George Catlin (1796–1872), Kane solicited testimonials from people familiar with the subjects he had depicted. Certificates confirming the masterful qualities of Kane’s sketches were issued by Hudson’s Bay Company factors<sup>7</sup> in the Columbia River region, all of whom were well acquainted with the area. The testimonial of John Lee Lewes of Fort Colville in the Oregon Territory is a prime example: “The sketches which Mr. Kane has taken, representing Indian Groups are most true and striking, their manners and customs are depicted with a correctness, that none but a Master hand could accomplish. The individual likenesses are also of a first rate class ... most striking and perfect likenesses.... The Landscape Scenery ... also most correctly delineated, and from their truth to nature ... convey a Just Idea of the many Picturesque and romantic spots of the Columbia [River].”<sup>8</sup>



Paul Kane, *Fort Edmonton, Hudson's Bay Company; Plains Cree, Assiniboine*, c. 1849–56, oil on canvas, 43 x 71 cm, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.

Despite Kane's apparent penchant for dispassionate observation, the aesthetic conventions and contrivances commonly found within the canon of Western art are evident throughout his oeuvre, including his works on paper. Kane uses elevated viewpoints, aerial perspective that leads the viewer's eye into the distance, asymmetry of the landscape, and a variety of topographic textures within a single image. Even in watercolour drawings or oil sketches that are assumed to have been drawn on the spot, Kane has either actively sought out or modified what nature had to offer, creating views that are picturesque, such as *Fort Edmonton*, c. 1849-56.<sup>9</sup> And, of course, Kane's tendency to romanticize and idealize in some of his portraits also derives from aesthetic convention, as in his oil painting *Kee-akee-ka-saa-ka-wow*, c. 1849-56. Kane's pictures were inspired as much by learned visual culture as they were by the raw nature that was his subject.

Kane would not have seen his use of aesthetic conventions as contradicting his pursuit of accuracy. For Kane, truth was not necessarily objective verisimilitude, but the transcendence of the particular in order to evoke a more profound essence of his subject.



Paul Kane, *Kee-akee-ka-saa-ka-wow*, Plains Cree, c. 1849-56, oil on canvas, 75.9 x 63.4 cm, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.





The Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto has the largest collection of works by Paul Kane, but sketches and paintings can be found in public collections from the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa to the Stark Museum in Orange, Texas. Although the works listed below are held by the following institutions, they may not always be on view.

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## ART GALLERY OF ONTARIO

317 Dundas Street West  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
1-877-255-4246 or 416-979-6648  
ago.net



**Paul Kane, *Indian Encampment on Lake Huron*, c. 1845**  
Oil on canvas  
48.3 x 73.7 cm



**Paul Kane, *Scene in the Northwest—Portrait of John Henry Lefroy*, c. 1845-46**  
Oil on canvas  
55.5 x 76 cm



**Paul Kane, *The Buffalo Pound*, c. 1846-49**  
Oil on paperboard  
21.9 x 35 cm

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## NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA

380 Sussex Drive  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada  
613-990-1985  
gallery.ca



**Paul Kane, *Eliza Clarke Cory Clench*, c. 1834-36**  
Oil on canvas  
71.5 x 56.3 cm



**Paul Kane, *Freeman Schermerhorn Clench*, c. 1834-36**  
Oil on canvas  
71 x 56 cm



**Paul Kane, *Leonardo da Vinci*, c. 1842**  
Oil on wood  
20.7 x 16.8 cm



**Paul Kane, *Assiniboine Hunting Buffalo*, c. 1851-56**  
Oil on canvas  
46 x 73.7 cm

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## RIVERBRINK ART MUSEUM

116 Queenston Street  
Queenston, Ontario, Canada  
905-262-4510  
riverbrink.org



**Paul Kane, *Portrait of Mrs. Conger of Cobourg*, c. 1834**  
Oil on canvas  
23.6 x 29 cm



**Paul Kane, *Self-Portrait*, c. 1843-45**  
Oil on canvas  
58 x 62 cm

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## ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

100 Queen's Park  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
416-586-8000  
rom.on.ca



**Paul Kane, *Medicine Pipe Stem Dance*, Blackfoot, c. 1849-52**  
Oil on canvas  
48.9 x 74.5 cm



**Paul Kane, *Six Black Feet Chiefs*, Blackfoot, c. 1849-55**  
Oil on canvas  
65.5 x 78.5 cm



**Paul Kane, *The Cackabakah Falls*, c. 1849-56**  
Oil on canvas  
51 x 71 cm



**Paul Kane, *The Constant Sky*, Saulteaux, c. 1849-56**  
Oil on canvas  
63.5 x 76.2 cm

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**Paul Kane, *Cunnewabum*, Metis (Plains Cree and British ancestry), c. 1849-56**

Oil on canvas  
64.2 x 51.5 cm



**Paul Kane, *Flat Head Woman and Child*, Caw-wacham, Cowlitz, c. 1849-56**

Oil on canvas  
75.9 x 63.4 cm



**Paul Kane, *Fort Edmonton*, Hudson's Bay Company; Plains Cree, Assiniboine, c. 1849-56**

Oil on canvas  
43 x 71 cm



**Paul Kane, *Half Breeds Travelling*, Plains Metis, c. 1849-56**

Oil on canvas  
46.2 x 74.1 cm



**Paul Kane, *Head Chief of the Assiniboines*, (Portrait of Mah-min), Assiniboine, c. 1849-56**

Oil on canvas  
76.3 x 63.9 cm



**Paul Kane, *Kee-akee-ka-saa-ka-wow*, "The Man That Gives the War Whoop", Head Chief of the Crees, c. 1849-56**

Oil on canvas  
75.9 x 63.4 cm



**Paul Kane, *The Man That Always Rides*, Blackfoot, c. 1849-56**

Oil on canvas  
46.3 x 60.9 cm



**Paul Kane, *Nesperces Indian*, Nez Perce, c. 1849-56**

Oil on canvas  
64.2 x 51.2 cm



**Paul Kane, *A Prairie on Fire*, c. 1849-56**

Oil on canvas  
45.8 x 74 cm



**Paul Kane, *Running Buffalo*, Assiniboine, c. 1849-56**

Oil on canvas  
45.4 x 74.2 cm



**Paul Kane, *Scalp Dance*, Colville, Colville (Interior Salish), c. 1849-56**

Oil on canvas  
47.9 x 73.7 cm



**Paul Kane, *The Death of Omothesisixany or Big Snake*, 1860**

Chromolithograph in seventeen colours, embossed and printed on wove paper  
37.5 x 46.3 cm



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**STARK MUSEUM OF ART**

712 Green Avenue  
Orange, Texas, United States  
409-886-2787  
[starkculturalvenues.org/starkmuseum/](http://starkculturalvenues.org/starkmuseum/)



**Paul Kane, *Culchillum Wearing a Medicine Cap*, April-June 1847**

Watercolour on paper  
12.3 x 11.4 cm

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**Paul Kane, *Lower Falls on the Pelouse River*, 1847**

Watercolour and  
graphite on paper  
14 x 23.5 cm

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**Paul Kane, *François Lucie, A Cree Half-Breed Guide*, c. 1847-48**

Oil on paper  
27.7 x 22.3 cm

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**Paul Kane, *Medicine Pipe Stem Dance*, 1848**

Oil on paper  
24.8 x 31.1 cm

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## NOTES

### BIOGRAPHY

1. Paul James Kane, "The Paul Kane Family," in Kenneth R. Lister, *Paul Kane, the Artist: Wilderness to Studio* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 2010), 48. The eldest son, James, died in New York City in 1829, but it is not known how he ended up there or how he earned his living.

2. Henry J. Morgan, *Sketches of Celebrated Canadians, and Persons Connected with Canada* (Quebec: Hunter, Rose, 1862), 731.

3. J. Russell Harper, *Paul Kane's Frontier: Including Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America by Paul Kane* (Austin: University of Texas Press for Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth; and National Gallery of Canada, 1971), 9.

4. George Walton, compiler, *York Commercial Directory, Street Guide, and Register, 1833-34* (York: Thomas Dalton, [1833]), 77. He is listed as "Cane, Paul."

5. Carol D. Lowrey, "The Society of Artists & Amateurs, 1834: Toronto's First Art Exhibition and Its Antecedents," *RACAR: Revue d'art canadienne / Canadian Art Revue* 8, no. 2 (1981): 99-118.

6. J. Russell Harper, *Paul Kane's Frontier: Including Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America by Paul Kane* (Austin: University of Texas Press for Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth; and National Gallery of Canada, 1971), 9; and Paul James Kane, "The Paul Kane Family," in Kenneth R. Lister, *Paul Kane, the Artist: Wilderness to Studio* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 2010), 50.

7. J. Russell Harper, *Paul Kane's Frontier: Including Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America by Paul Kane* (Austin: University of Texas Press for Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth; and National Gallery of Canada, 1971), 11.

8. Letter from Michael Kane, Toronto, to Paul Kane, Detroit, November 4, 1836. Transcription in J. Russell Harper, *Paul Kane's Frontier: Including Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America by Paul Kane* (Austin: University of Texas Press for Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth; and National Gallery of Canada, 1971), 326, appendix 2, letter 10.

9. J. Russell Harper, *Paul Kane's Frontier: Including Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America by Paul Kane* (Austin: University of Texas Press for Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth; and National Gallery of Canada, 1971), 12.



10. Re Kane's itinerary to and in Europe, his passport, and citation of copies of paintings, some of which are known about through a shipping list, see J. Russell Harper, *Paul Kane's Frontier: Including Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America by Paul Kane* (Austin: University of Texas Press for Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth; and National Gallery of Canada, 1971), 11–12 (passport); 271 (shipping list).

11. George Catlin, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indian*, 2 vols. (London: published by author, 1841).

12. J. Russell Harper, *Paul Kane's Frontier: Including Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America by Paul Kane* (Austin: University of Texas Press for Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth; and National Gallery of Canada, 1971), 14.

13. For a litany of examples of this belief and the reasons behind it, see Kenneth R. Lister, "Leaves from an American Plant," in *The First Brush: Paul Kane & Infrared Reflectography* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 2014), 37–44.

14. See Arthur J. Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade: Their Role as Trappers, Hunters, and Middlemen in the Lands Southwest of Hudson Bay, 1660–1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974).

15. Kane also had HBC traders acquire artifacts on his behalf. See the letter from Peter Skene Ogden to Kane, March 12, 1848, transcribed in J. Russell Harper, *Paul Kane's Frontier: Including Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America by Paul Kane* (Austin: University of Texas Press for Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth; and National Gallery of Canada, 1971), 330–31.

16. J. Russell Harper, "Ontario Painters, 1846–1867: A Study of Art at the Upper Canada Provincial Exhibitions," *National Gallery of Canada Bulletin* 1 (1963): 30.

17. The Canadian Institute, called the Royal Canadian Institute from 1914, is the country's oldest scientific society. It was founded in 1849 under the leadership of Sandford Fleming (1827–1915), who built the transcontinental railway and developed the concept of standard time.

18. The published papers are attributed as "by Kane"; the assumption is that Kane also read the paper at the meeting, though this has not been confirmed. "The Chinook Indians," *Canadian Journal* 3, no. 12 (July 1855): 273–79; "Notes on a Sojourn among the Half-Breeds, Hudson's Bay Company's Territory, Red River," *Canadian Journal*, n.s., no. 2 (February 1856): 128–38; "Notes of Travel among the Walla-Walla Indians," *Canadian Journal*, n.s., no. 5 (September 1856): 417–24.

19. Helen R. Deese, ed., *Daughter of Boston: The Extraordinary Diary of a Nineteenth-Century Woman* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2005), 184 (December 1, 1853), 188 (February 7, 1854), 192 (April 13, 1854), 219 (October 12, 1854). William H.G. Kingston writes of his visit to Kane's studio in 1853 in *Western Wanderings, or a Pleasure Tour in the Canadas*, vol. 2 (London: Chapman & Hall; Montreal: Benjamin Dawson, 1856), 43–46.
20. William H.G. Kingston, *Western Wanderings, or a Pleasure Tour in the Canadas*, vol. 2 (London: Chapman & Hall; Montreal: Benjamin Dawson, 1856), 44.
21. *Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada from the 20th Day of May to the 30th Day of August [...] Session 1851*, 310. This was Kane's second attempt; his first submission was read on July 26, 1850. See *Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada from the 14th Day of May to the 10th Day of August [...] Session 1850*, 194.
22. William Allan, his father, had amassed great wealth in the Family Compact era. John Charles Dent, "The Hon. George William Allan, D.C.L," *The Canadian Portrait Gallery*, vol. 4 (Toronto: John B. Magurn, 1881), 171.
23. *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Burlington Ladies' Academy of Hamilton, Canada West* (Hamilton: The Academy, 1846; 1848).
24. J. Russell Harper, "Ontario Painters, 1846–67: A Study of Art at the Upper Canada Provincial Exhibitions," *National Gallery of Canada Bulletin* 1 (1963): 29.
25. Mechanics' Institute, letter to the editor, *Globe* (Toronto), June 20, 1859, 2; and June 17, 1859, 2.
26. *The Irish Canadian*, March 2, 1870, as cited in Paul James Kane, "The Paul Kane Family," in Kenneth R. Lister, *Paul Kane, the Artist: Wilderness to Studio* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 2010), 49.
27. Canada Census 1871, District 47, Division 6, St. James Ward, sub-district B, schedule 2, "Nominal Return of the Deaths within Last Twelve Months," p. 1, line 16.

#### KEY WORKS: FREEMAN SCHERMERHORN CLENCH

1. Kenneth W. Johnson, "Conger, Wilson Seymour," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 9, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, [http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id\\_nbr=4363](http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=4363).
2. John R. Gayer, "The Analysis and Treatment of Two Portraits Attributed to Paul Kane (1810–1871)," *Journal of the International Institute for Conservation–Canadian Group* 21 (1996): 16–29.



**KEY WORKS: PORTRAIT OF JOHN HENRY LEFROY**

1. Two versions of this painting exist: this version, in the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, and another, of somewhat inferior execution, at the Glenbow Museum, Calgary. It is possible that the version exhibited at the Toronto Society of Arts in 1847 was the Glenbow's copy. Two facts suggest that a copy (rather than the original) was exhibited in 1847: in the exhibition catalogue, the title of the work does not identify the sitter, and uncharacteristically, no owner is identified.

2. Lady [Charlotte Anne] Lefroy, ed., *Autobiography of General Sir John Henry Lefroy* (published privately, printed in London by Pardon & Sons, 1895), 76.

3. Letter from Lefroy, Lake Athabaska, to his sister Isabella, December 25, 1843, cited in John Henry Lefroy, *In Search of the Magnetic North: A Soldier-Surveyor's Letters from the North-West, 1843-1844*, ed. George Francis Gilman (Toronto: Macmillan, 1955), 83.

4. The range of dates is based on the presence of both Kane and Lefroy in Toronto. Kane was back in Toronto by December 1845; Lefroy married on April 16, 1846, immediately left the country on his honeymoon, and returned to Toronto at the end of November 1846, by which date Kane's trip through the HBC territories was already well under way.

5. J. Russell Harper, *Paul Kane's Frontier: Including Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America by Paul Kane* (Austin: University of Texas Press for Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth; and National Gallery of Canada, 1971), 16.

6. The members of the Toronto Society of Arts, which had replaced the upper-class Society of Artists and Amateurs, were professional artists and architects intent on developing quality standards of practice, showcasing local talent, and exercising their newfound nationalism. See Carol D. Lowrey, "The Toronto Society of Arts, 1847-48: Patriotism and the Pursuit of Culture in Canada West," *RACAR: Revue d'art canadienne / Canadian Art Review* 12, no. 1 (1985): 3-44.

**KEY WORKS: KEE-AKEE-KA-SAA-KA-WOW**

1. As transcribed by I.S. MacLaren: "Saw a grate band / of Cree Indans made a sketch / [syllabics] / of Muck-e-too and Caw-ke-kis / suw-k-way the first is pouder [The Powder] / the second is the man that / always speekes the last / of these dilliveres his ordere / in a low tone in his hert / the other gets on a Horse / and communicates the same / to the camp in general." I.S. MacLaren, "'I came to rite thare portraits': Paul Kane's Journal of His Western Travels, 1846-1848," *American Art Journal* 21, no. 2 (1989): 30.

2. Kane's 1848 exhibition *Sketches of Indians, and Indian Chiefs, Landscapes, Dances, Costumes, &c., &c. by Paul Kane*, gives the title as "Ka-ah-ke-ka-sahk-a-wa-ow, 'The Man That Gives the War Whoop-The Head Chief of the Cree Tribe'" (cat. no. 84). The watercolour is also cited in Kane's portrait log as no. 94, "Kee-a-Kee-Ka-sa-coo-way the one that gives the ware hupe."

**KEY WORKS: THE BUFFALO POUND**

1. Letter from George Simpson to Paul Kane, 1847, cited in J. Russell Harper, *Paul Kane's Frontier: Including Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America by Paul Kane* (Austin: University of Texas Press for Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth; and National Gallery of Canada, 1971), 330, appendix 10, letter 12.
2. Letter from George Simpson to Paul Kane, 1847, cited in J. Russell Harper, *Paul Kane's Frontier: Including Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America by Paul Kane* (Austin: University of Texas Press for Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth; and National Gallery of Canada, 1971), 330, appendix 10, letter 12. See also Susan Stewart, "Paul Kane's Paintings Rediscovered," *Journal of Canadian Art History* 5, no. 2 (1981): 91.
3. "The Provincial Exhibition," *Anglo-American Magazine* 1, no. 4 (October 1852): 373.

**KEY WORKS: MEDICINE PIPE STEM DANCE**

1. Paul Kane, in J. Russell Harper, *Paul Kane's Frontier: Including Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America by Paul Kane* (Austin: University of Texas Press for Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth; and National Gallery of Canada, 1971), 150.
2. See Kenneth R. Lister, *Paul Kane, the Artist: Wilderness to Studio* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 2010), 358, figure a (Paul Kane, *Pipe and Pipe Stems*, 1848, watercolour and graphite on paper, 14.5 x 24.4 cm, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, 946.15.100) and figure b (Paul Kane, *Blackfoot Pipe-Stem*, 1848, oil on paper, 24.4 x 20.3 cm, Stark Museum of Art, Orange, Texas, 31.78.170).
3. "The Provincial Exhibition," *Anglo-American Magazine* 1, no. 4 (October 1852): 372. It is not known if the reviewer is referring to Kane's actual field journal, or if "journal" is a loose reference to possible draft texts of *Wanderings of an Artist*.

**KEY WORKS: FLAT HEAD WOMAN AND CHILD**

1. Kenneth R. Lister identifies both infant and mother as Cowlitz. *Paul Kane, the Artist: Wilderness to Studio* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 2010), 268. It is possible, however, that the profile of the mother is based on a drawing identified by Lister as Songhees (Central Coast Salish), or on one identified by Lister as Southern Coast Salish. See page 274, figure c (Paul Kane, *Woman Spinning Yarn*, 1847, watercolour on paper, 12.4 x 17.8 cm, Stark Museum of Art, Orange, Texas, 31.78.96); and page 290 (Paul Kane, *A Flathead Woman*, 1847, watercolour on paper, 15.6 x 10.8 cm, Stark Museum of Art, Orange, Texas, 31.78.107).
2. J. Russell Harper, *Paul Kane's Frontier: Including Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America by Paul Kane* (Austin: University of Texas Press for Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth; and National Gallery of Canada, 1971), 93.



3. "The Provincial Exhibition," *Anglo-American Magazine* 1, no. 4 (October 1852): 374. The discussion of "Sketch of a Chinook" includes an excerpt from Charles G. Nicolay's *Oregon Territory* (London: Charles Knight, 1846), in which reference is made to cranial reshaping signifying free (non-slave) birth.
4. "Various articles of dress worn by the Chinook Indians, specimens of their bows and arrows, spears, cooking utensils, and a skull taken from one of their graves, were exhibited. Several admirable oil paintings, executed by Mr. Kane, illustrated many important features of the lives and characters of the Chinook Indians." "The Chinook Indians," *Canadian Journal* 3, vol. 12 (July 1855): 273-74. A modified version of this paper appears with the same title in *Canadian Journal*, n.s., 2, vol. 7 (January 1857): 11-30.
5. Daniel Wilson, Review of *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America*, by Paul Kane, *Canadian Journal*, n.s., 4, vol. 21 (May 1859): 192-93.
6. Daniel Wilson, *Prehistoric Man: Researches into the Origin of Civilisation in the Old and the New World* (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1862).
7. Paul Kane, *Clallam Woman Weaving a Basket*, 1847, watercolour on paper, 13.6 x 22.5 cm, Stark Museum of Art, Orange, Texas, 31.78.5. Reproduced in Kenneth R. Lister, *Paul Kane, the Artist: Wilderness to Studio* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 2010), 274, fig. e.
8. Heather Dawkins, "Paul Kane and the Eye of Power: Racism in Canadian Art History," *Vanguard* 15, no. 4 (September 1986): 26. Dawkins identifies the woman as Cowlitz, the infant as Chinook. Dawkins's discussion is based on complementary textual references in *Wanderings of an Artist*.

#### KEY WORKS: THE CACKABAKAH FALLS

1. The modern spelling is "Kakabeka." "Cackabakah" is the spelling used in the 1856 manuscript list of paintings sent to George W. Allan. See Kenneth R. Lister, *Paul Kane, the Artist: Wilderness to Studio* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 2010), 212.
2. Chert is a sedimentary rock that can form in layers. Breaking the rock will produce sharp edges. It occurs in a range of colours (white to black, cream to brown, reds, greens) that depend on surrounding sediments and organic matter. The darker colours of chert are referred to as "flint" and were often used for implements such as arrowheads.

3. "At 4 next morning got to the / Mounthen falls made a portage over the mounthen then ma- / de a nother about half a mile / further called they lost mens / portage from 3 men in cros / -ing it having lost thare way / Next came the pin portage / so called from the rocks / being verry sharp and cut / they mens feete I made a / cetchis of bouth of these." As transcribed by I.S. MacLaren in "'I came to rite thare portraits': Paul Kane's Journal of His Western Travels, 1846-1848," *American Art Journal* 21, no. 2 (1989): 23. The entry in *Wanderings of an Artist* is more specific about Kane having made a sketch of the falls at a "mountain portage." See J. Russell Harper, *Paul Kane's Frontier: Including Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America by Paul Kane* (Austin: University of Texas Press for Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth; and National Gallery of Canada, 1971), 63.

#### KEY WORKS: FORT EDMONTON

1. J. Russell Harper, *Paul Kane's Frontier: Including Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America by Paul Kane* (Austin: University of Texas Press for Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth; and National Gallery of Canada, 1971), 18.
2. Harlich [sic] *Castle and Distant View of Snowdon, N. Wales*. Although it is not known which print of Harlech Castle and Snowdon Kane copied, a number of prints of this title date from before 1834, when Kane exhibited his copy at the Society of Artists and Amateurs of Toronto, cat. no. 112.
3. Paul Kane, *Fort Edmonton from a Distance*, 1846, graphite on paper, 14 x 23 cm, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, 946.15.122. Reproduced in Kenneth R. Lister, *Paul Kane, the Artist: Wilderness to Studio* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 2010), 242, fig. b.
4. Paul Kane, *Fort Edmonton with Native Camp in Foreground*, 1846, graphite on paper, 13.8 x 22.9 cm, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, 946.15.174.2. Reproduced in Kenneth R. Lister, *Paul Kane, the Artist: Wilderness to Studio* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 2010), 242, fig. a.
5. See W.J.T. Mitchell, "Space, Place, and Landscape," preface; and "Imperial Landscape," chap. 1, in *Landscape and Power*, 2nd ed. (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2002). The degree to which landscape as imperialist ideology remains a conceptual force in cultural studies is discussed in Rachel DeLue and James Elkins, eds., *Landscape Theory* (London: Routledge, 2010).
6. J. Russell Harper, *Paul Kane's Frontier: Including Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America by Paul Kane* (Austin: University of Texas Press for Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth; and National Gallery of Canada, 1971), 18.



**KEY WORKS: CUNNAWA-BUM**

1. Kenneth R. Lister, *Paul Kane, the Artist: Wilderness to Studio* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 2010), 334.
2. Paul Kane, in J. Russell Harper, *Paul Kane's Frontier: Including Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America by Paul Kane* (Austin: University of Texas Press for Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth; and National Gallery of Canada, 1971), 139.
3. Daniel Wilson, Review of *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America*, by Paul Kane, *Canadian Journal*, n.s., 4, no. 21 (May 1859): 193.

**KEY WORKS: THE CONSTANT SKY**

1. In *Discourse on Inequality* (1755) the philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau presents his theory of the natural society, in which humankind in a "primitive" state lives in harmony with nature.
2. One suggested combination is the landscape of the Berens River (which flows into Lake Winnipeg), with the box, which appears below The Constant Sky's left hand, originating from the western Great Lakes (Lake Superior). See Kenneth R. Lister, *Paul Kane, the Artist: Wilderness to Studio* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 2010), 374.

**KEY WORKS: THE DEATH OF OMOXESISIXANY**

1. Arlene Gehmacher, "The Death of Omoxesisixany or Big Snake," in Kenneth R. Lister, *Paul Kane, the Artist: Wilderness to Studio* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 2010), 372.
2. The report in July 1848 of Big Snake's death is referred to in J. Russell Harper, *Paul Kane's Frontier: Including Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America by Paul Kane* (Austin: University of Texas Press for Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth; and National Gallery of Canada, 1971), 152. The report was erroneous; Big Snake lived until 1858.
3. Kenneth R. Lister, *Paul Kane, the Artist: Wilderness to Studio* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 2010), 370.

**SIGNIFICANCE & CRITICAL ISSUES**

1. Paul Kane, in J. Russell Harper, *Paul Kane's Frontier: Including Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America by Paul Kane* (Austin: University of Texas Press for Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth; and National Gallery of Canada, 1971), 51.
2. The "salvage paradigm" was coined by James Clifford, "On Ethnographic Allegory," in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 98-121.
3. "The Provincial Exhibition," *Anglo-American Magazine* (Toronto) 1, no. 4 (October 1852): 371, 372.

4. The largest collection of sketches appeared in 1978 at the Stark Museum of Art, in Orange, Texas.

5. Kathleen Wood, "Paul Kane Sketches," *Rotunda*, Winter 1969, 4-15.

6. J. Russell Harper, *Paul Kane's Frontier: Including Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America by Paul Kane* (Austin: University of Texas Press for Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth; and National Gallery of Canada, 1971); Kenneth R. Lister, *Paul Kane, the Artist: Wilderness to Studio* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 2010).

7. "The Provincial Exhibition," *Anglo-American Magazine* (Toronto) 1, no. 4 (October 1852): 372. The quotation refers to *Medicine Pipe-Stem Dance*. Ironically the lengthy passage quoted in the review would not be included in *Wanderings of an Artist*.

8. I.S. MacLaren, "'I came to rite thare portraits': Paul Kane's Journal of His Western Travels, 1846-1848," *American Art Journal* 21, no. 2 (1989): 6-88. The ghostwriter is as yet unidentified.

9. J. Russell Harper, *Paul Kane's Frontier: Including Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America by Paul Kane* (Austin: University of Texas Press for Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth; and National Gallery of Canada, 1971), 289, cat. nos. IV-208, IV-209, IV-210.

## STYLE & TECHNIQUE

1. Most of Kane's early copies were landscapes based on prints. The popularity of picturesque views of sites such as Harlech Castle allows us to speculate that Kane's work of a similar title featured the same kind of aesthetic. Kane's work was titled *Harlich [sic] Castle and Distant View of Snowdon, N. Wales*. Society of Artists and Amateurs of Toronto (Toronto, 1834), cat. no. 112.

2. A few works were executed on wood panel, such as *Red River Settlement*, 1846, oil on board, 22.9 x 35.2 cm, Stark Museum of Art, Orange, Texas, 31.78.139.

3. Kane was guided to the site at river level, after which he climbed the bank height. According to his daily journal entries, he spent four days travelling to and around lower and upper Pelouse Falls (July 14-17, 1847). See I.S. MacLaren, "'I came to rite thare portraits': Paul Kane's Journal of His Western Travels, 1846-1848," *American Art Journal* 21, no. 2 (1989): 41.

4. *Peluce Fall*, 1849-56, oil on canvas, 46.5 x 74.5 cm, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, 912.1.70. Reproduced in Kenneth R. Lister, *Paul Kane, the Artist: Wilderness to Studio* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 2010), 311. "Peluce" is the spelling used in the 1856 manuscript list of paintings for George W. Allan (see page 310).

5. For example, Frederick Catherwood, *Views of Ancient Monuments in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan* (London: F. Catherwood, 1844).





6. William H. Wollaston, "Description of the Camera Lucida," *Philosophical Magazine*, series 1, 58, no. 27 (1807): 343-47.

7. A factor was an agent-in-charge in North America who, on behalf of England's HBC, transacted business at an appointed fort and administered the interests of its surrounding territory.

8. William McBean was at Walla Walla, John Lee Lewes at Fort Colville, and James Douglas at Fort Vancouver. J. Russell Harper, *Paul Kane's Frontier: Including Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America by Paul Kane* (Austin: University of Texas Press for Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth; and National Gallery of Canada, 1971), 328-30, appendix 10, letters 7 (Douglas), 9 (McBean), 11 (Lewes).

9. I.S. MacLaren, "Notes towards a Reconsideration of Paul Kane's Art and Prose," *Canadian Literature* 113-14 (Summer/Autumn 1987): 179-205.

## GLOSSARY

### **Arcadia**

A term denoting an idyllic pastoral landscape or natural utopia. Arcadian landscapes can be traced to the Hellenistic period, and they feature perhaps most famously in Italian Renaissance and eighteenth-century French and British paintings. The word derives from the name of a Greek province that has existed since antiquity.

### **Bodmer, Karl (Swiss/French, 1809–1893)**

A painter and draftsman who in the early 1830s was hired to accompany an expedition to the American West specifically to record images of its cities, landscapes, and people. His depictions of the American wilderness were greatly admired in his time for their beauty and anthropological detail. In 1848 Bodmer joined the Barbizon School of painters in France, whose inspiration came from nature.

### **Bowman, James (American, 1793–1842)**

An itinerant portrait painter active in the United States, Europe, and Canada. In Quebec City, Montreal, and Toronto Bowman received commissions from leading society members and politicians; he completed ten paintings for Montreal's Notre-Dame Basilica (eight of which are now lost).

### **camera lucida**

A drawing aid popular in the early nineteenth century, which projects the object to be drawn onto a piece of paper by means of a prism. It was patented in 1807 by William Hyde Wollaston and famously used by William Henry Fox Talbot, whose poor drawing skills partly motivated his early experiments in photography.

### **Catlin, George (American, 1796–1872)**

A painter, writer, and traveller passionately devoted to the subject of American Aboriginal culture. Hundreds of Catlin's ethnographic paintings—some of which garnered high praise from contemporary critics, including Charles Baudelaire—are now held by the Smithsonian Institution and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

### **chromolithograph**

A colour lithograph, popular from the mid-nineteenth century for book illustrations and print portfolios. Chromolithographs were produced through the use of numerous lithographic stones, each of which was inked with one of the colours needed for the final print.

### **Clark, William (American, 1770–1838)**

Although remembered largely for his leading role in the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Northwest (1803–6), Clark served as an Indian Affairs agent for over thirty years. As the U.S. government's representative to nearly all the tribes in the West, he negotiated treaties and supervised numerous land cessions.



**Clench, Harriet (Canadian, 1823–1892)**

A watercolourist and oil painter whose practice spanned almost forty years. Clench's preferred subjects were landscapes, flowers, and figures. She assisted her husband, Paul Kane, in organizing his field sketches for an exhibition at Toronto City Hall in 1848. In 1849 she participated in the Upper Canada Provincial Exhibition.

**Eastman, Seth (American, 1808–1875)**

An artist, topographer, and military officer who trained at West Point Military Academy. While stationed in Minnesota, Eastman began depicting First Nations peoples, and in 1847 he was commissioned to illustrate the monumental study *Indian Tribes of the United States* for the U.S. Congress.

***en plein air***

French for "open air," used to describe the practice of painting or sketching outdoors to observe nature and in particular the changing effects of light.

**lithograph**

A type of print invented in 1798 in Germany by Aloys Senefelder. Like other planographic methods of image reproduction, lithography relies on the fact that grease and water do not mix. Placed in a press, the moistened and inked lithographic stone will print only those areas previously designed with greasy lithographic ink.

**Miller, Alfred Jacob (American, 1810–1874)**

A painter known for his Romantic depictions of the American West. Sweeping and dramatic or quietly intimate, these oil paintings of landscapes, fur trappers, and Indigenous peoples arose from the hundreds of watercolour sketches Miller made in the 1830s while part of an expedition to the Rocky Mountains.

**picturesque**

A term developed in late eighteenth-century Britain that refers to a particular variety of landscape and to a style of painting and design. The wilder areas of the British Isles, for example, were understood as perfectly "picturesque." It draws from contemporary notions of the sublime and the beautiful.

**post-colonial art history**

An art history informed by critical theorization of the social, political, and cultural consequences of colonialism or imperialism for both the colonizers and the colonized. Post-colonial or settler art history explores questions of national identity, ethnicity, agency, and authenticity in the work of artists within cross-cultural contexts.

**Romantic tradition**

A multi-faceted movement that affected most areas of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Western culture, including art, literature, and philosophy. Romanticism privileged the emotional and the subjective; it arose in opposition to Enlightenment-era rationalism.

**salvage paradigm**

In the context of twentieth-century ethnography, travel literature, and anthropology, the salvage paradigm is an ideological position whereby a dominant Western society assumes the inevitability of a non-Western culture's demise, owing to its perceived inability to adapt to modern life. The conclusion is that the non-Western culture can be "saved" only by the collection, documentation, and preservation of artifacts and accounts of its presence.

**Stanley, John Mix (American, 1814–1872)**

An itinerant artist and photographer known for his landscape paintings. Stanley began to paint Native Americans while working in Wisconsin and Illinois; he later joined numerous expeditions to the American West, making sketches and daguerreotypes of Indigenous peoples and scenery for the country's military.

**sublime**

A complex and important idea in the history of aesthetics, sparked in late seventeenth-century Europe by the translation of the ancient Greek text *On the Sublime* (attributed to Longinus) and furthered by the eighteenth-century philosopher Edmund Burke and many others. In painting, the sublime is often expressed in scenes of exalted or mysterious grandeur—terrifying storms at sea, wild skies, steep mountains—natural phenomena that both threaten the observer and inspire awe.

**tableau**

French for "picture," the term tableau refers to a formal grouping of people or objects, a striking scene.

***trompe l'oeil***

French for "deceives the eye," *trompe l'oeil* refers to visual illusion in art, especially images and painted objects that appear to exist in three dimensions and even aim to trick the viewer into thinking that they are real. Common examples are the painted insects that appear to sit on the surface of Renaissance paintings, and murals that make flat walls appear to open into spaces beyond.

**Vernet, Horace (French, 1789–1863)**

A painter favoured by the various regimes of nineteenth-century France whose patrons included royal and imperial figures. Among his works are portraits of Napoleon and Charles X and history paintings for Louis-Philippe I at Versailles. He was director of the Académie de France à Rome (1828–35).

**Waugh, Samuel Bell (American, 1814–1885)**

A painter who lived for several years in Toronto, working as a self-taught portraitist and managing the Theatre Royal, which produced panoramas, recitations, and dance shows. He later studied painting in Rome and Naples before returning to the United States where he established himself as a portraitist and landscape painter. His two critically acclaimed panoramas of Italy were exhibited in Philadelphia in the mid-1850s.





**Wilson, Daniel (Scottish/Canadian, 1816–1892)**

An artist and scholar of early British history and the indigenous populations of North America. Wilson left Edinburgh for Canada in 1853 to chair a department at the newly founded University College, Toronto. His study of Native culture informed his enlightened view that all humankind shares ingenuity and ability and that geographical and climatic circumstances rather than biological destiny determine any society's development.

**woodcut**

A relief method of printing that involves carving a design into a block of wood, which is then inked and printed, using either a press or simple hand pressure. This technique was invented in China and spread to the West in the thirteenth century.





# SOURCES & RESOURCES

Paul Kane's oil paintings have had considerable exposure through public exhibition, whereas his works on paper have not, owing to the vulnerability of the medium. *Paul Kane's Frontier* (1971) by the Canadian art historian J. Russell Harper remains the key art historical treatment of Kane, complemented by Kenneth Lister's more recent monograph, *Paul Kane, the Artist: Wilderness to Studio* (2010), in which Kane's cycle of one hundred paintings is reproduced in its entirety.



## KEY EXHIBITIONS

The nineteenth-century exhibitions of Kane's work are important insofar as they reveal the artist's own efforts in promoting his work to the public of Toronto and other urban centres in Ontario. Interest in Kane's work seems to have waned after his death: apart from the 1904 exhibition of his cycle of one hundred paintings (then in the collection of Ontario politician Sir Edmund Boyd Osler, who purchased them in 1903 from the estate of George W. Allan), it would take the centenary of Kane's death (1971) to provide an opportunity for renewed interest in the artist's career and a major exhibition. J. Russell Harper's accompanying substantive publication ensured continued research and encouraged new perspectives for the interpretation of Kane's oeuvre.



View of Paul Kane paintings in the Daphne Cockwell Gallery of Canada: First Peoples, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.

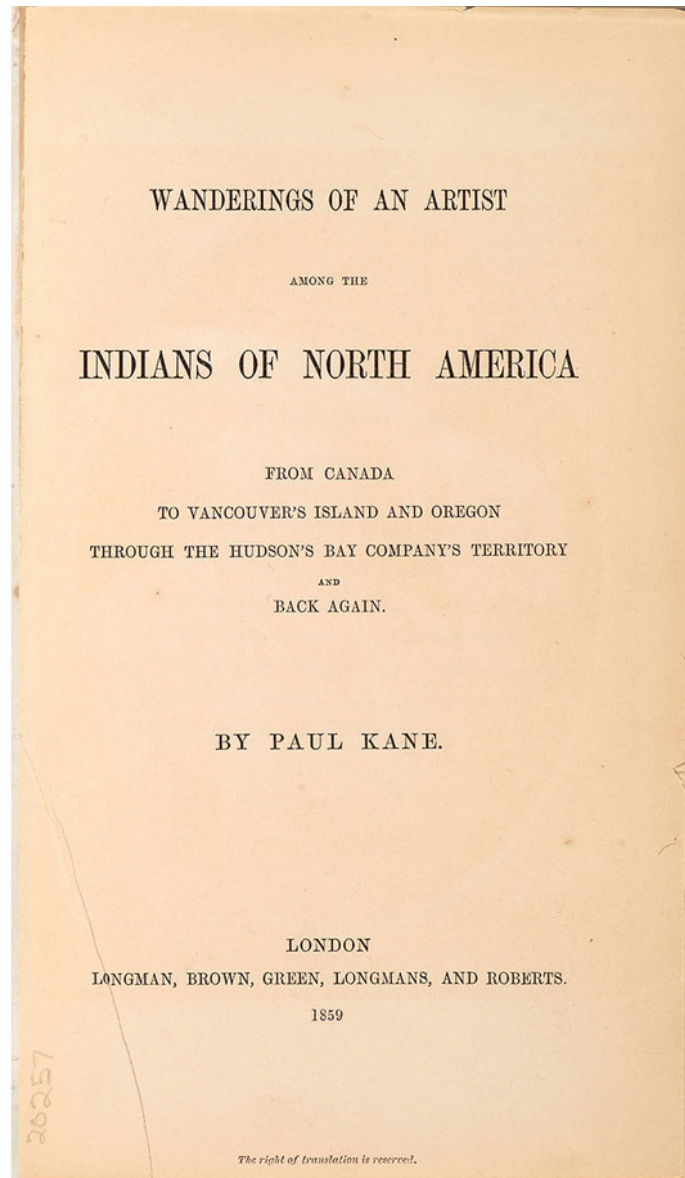
<b>1834</b>	July 1-31, 1834, Society of Artists and Amateurs, Toronto (cat. nos. 112, 113, 116, 121, 140, 151, 152, 173, 174).
<b>1846-57</b>	Upper Canada Provincial Exhibitions (specific dates and locales vary). Prize lists and reviews published in daily press and periodicals.
<b>1847</b>	April 12-May 1, 1847, Toronto Society of Arts (cat. nos. 24, 29, 39, 88, 117).
<b>1848</b>	<p>July 13-August [?], 1848, Toronto Society of Arts (cat. nos. 14, 17, 35, 46, 49, 257).</p> <p>November 1848, <i>Sketches of Indians, and Indian Chiefs, Landscapes, Dances, Costumes, &amp;c., &amp;c. by Paul Kane</i>, Toronto City Hall. Catalogue.</p>
<b>1904</b>	March 1904, <i>Pictures of Indians and Indian Life</i> , Women's Canadian Historical Society of Toronto, William Scott & Sons Gallery, Toronto.
<b>1971-72</b>	March 1971-March 1972, <i>Paul Kane, 1810-1871</i> , Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, Fort Worth, TX; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. <i>Paul Kane's Frontier</i> by J. Russell Harper published.
<b>1985-86</b>	April 1985-February 1986, <i>"I Took His Likeness": The Paintings of Paul Kane</i> , Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.
<b>1998-99</b>	November 1998-May 1999, <i>Wilderness to Studio: Four Views of Paul Kane</i> , Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.
<b>2000-01</b>	August 2000-February 2001, <i>Paul Kane: Land Study, Studio View</i> , Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.

#### WRITINGS BY KANE

Kane did not write about his art in a theoretical way. In his field journal he notes when he sketched, at times referring specifically to the subject. References to his artwork in his book *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America* appear to be based on the evidence of extant sketches and paintings. It is as though the sketches and the paintings, rather than his field journal notes, were his voice.

Although Kane is undoubtedly the author of his field journal, historian I.S. MacLaren argues that a literary accomplice would have been necessary to produce and publish *Wanderings of an Artist*. Indeed, Kane's field journal spellings are mostly phonetic and would have required editing for the published version. Additionally, much of the book contains information not even hinted at in his journal. From this it would seem that *Wanderings of an Artist* is based on Kane's verbal storytelling, the essence jotted down by an interpreter and then edited for formal publication.





LEFT: Frontispiece of Kane's book *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America* (1859). RIGHT: Title page of Kane's book *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America* (1859).

*Wanderings of an Artist* was reviewed in English-language journals and others, including the following:

*Athenaeum* (London). Unsigned review of *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America*, by Paul Kane. July 2, 1859, 14-15.

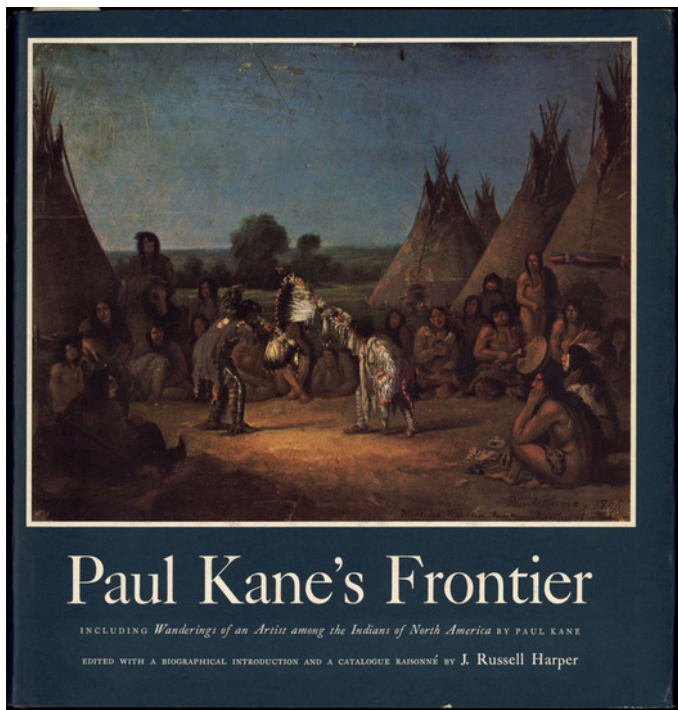
Lavollée, Charles. "Un artiste chez les Peaux-Rouges." *Revue des deux mondes* (Paris) 22 (1859): 936-86.

Wilson, Daniel. Review of *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America*, by Paul Kane. *Canadian Journal*, n.s., 4, no. 21 (May 1859): 186-94.

### CRITICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Kane's artwork and writing have been researched by ethnologists, literary critics, and art historians. Ethnologists were the first to study Kane's pictures, mainly because of the subject matter but also because in 1914 the cycle of one hundred paintings was acquired by the Royal Ontario Museum, which was then known for its anthropological and ethnological collections. The cycle continues to be a focus of study within the ROM's Anthropology section of the Department of World Cultures (see entries for Kenneth R. Lister below).

The study of Kane's work from an art historical perspective made its significant mark with a monograph and catalogue raisonné (see entry for J. Russell Harper below); more recent interpretations have used a post-colonial critique in approaching his work (see entry for Heather Dawkins below). Critical studies of Kane's writings (his journal and *Wanderings of an Artist*) have given significant insights into the nature of Kane's perceptions (see entries for I.S. MacLaren below).



LEFT: Front cover of *Paul Kane's Frontier* by J. Russell Harper (1971). RIGHT: Front cover of *Paul Kane, the Artist: Wilderness to Studio* by Kenneth Lister (2010).

### AUDIO AND VIDEO ABOUT THE ARTIST

The most significant audiovisual production on Paul Kane includes interviews with Aboriginal artists and cultural critics, commentaries by non-Aboriginal art historians, and commentaries by descendants of Paul Kane.

Bessai, John, and Joan Prowse. *From Field to Studio: The Art of Paul Kane*. Toronto: CineFocus Canada, 2006. DVD, 48 min.; interactive DVD, 48 min.

### FURTHER READING

The publications listed below reveal the range of commentary on Paul Kane—both scholarly and popular—and the abiding interest in his work. The authors include ethnographers, historians, art historians, literary critics, and educators.

Cook, Ramsay. "Raising Kane." *Canadian Art* 2, no. 3 (Fall 1985): 60–63.

Davis, Ann. "Indians' Historians: George Catlin and Paul Kane." In *A Distant Harmony: Comparisons in the Painting of Canada and the United States of America*, 33–68. Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1982.

Dawkins, Heather. "Paul Kane and the Eye of Power: Racism in Canadian Art History." *Vanguard* 15, no. 4 (September 1986): 24–27.



Round rattle, Northwest Coast, British Columbia, collected by Kane in 1847, wood, hair, and paint, 26 x 12.2 cm, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.



Eaton, Diane, and Sheila Urbanek. *Paul Kane's Great Nor-West*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1995.

Gehmacher, Arlene. "The Death of Omoxesisixany or Big Snake." In Kenneth R. Lister, *Paul Kane, the Artist: Wilderness to Studio*, 372. Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 2010.

Harper, J. Russell. *Paul Kane's Frontier: Including Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America by Paul Kane*. Austin: University of Texas Press for Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth; and National Gallery of Canada, 1971.

Lister, Kenneth R. *Paul Kane, the Artist: Wilderness to Studio*. Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 2010.

——, ed. *The First Brush: Paul Kane & Infrared Reflectography*. Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 2014.

MacLaren, I.S. "Notes towards a Reconsideration of Paul Kane's Art and Prose." *Canadian Literature* 113-14 (Summer/Autumn 1987): 179-205.



Fringe, possibly for a dress, possibly Plains Cree, collected by Kane c. 1845, quillwork on hide, 88.5 x 24.3 cm, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.

——. "'I came to rite thare portraits': Paul Kane's Journal of His Western Travels, 1846-1848." *American Art Journal* 21, no. 2 (1989): 6-88.

——. "Paul Kane's *Wanderings of an Artist* and the Rise of Transcontinental Canadian Nationalism." *Canadian Literature* 213 (Summer 2012): 16-38.

Stewart, Susan. "Paul Kane's Paintings Rediscovered." *Journal of Canadian Art History* 5, no. 2 (1981): 85-95.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### ARLENE GEHMACHER

Arlene Gehmacher is Curator of Canadian Paintings, Prints & Drawings, Department of World Cultures, Royal Ontario Museum. She received her PhD in Modern Art (specializing in Canadian art) at the University of Toronto in 1996. Before joining the ROM in 2000, she worked on curatorial projects and publications (*Ozias Leduc: An Art of Love and Reverie*, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 1996; *Cornelius Krieghoff: Images of Canada*, Art Gallery of Ontario, 1998; *Painting for Posterity: The Paintings of William Blair Bruce*, Art Gallery of Hamilton, 1999) and taught art history.

At the ROM, her research has been primarily collections-based, with publications focusing on Krieghoff at the Universal Exhibition of 1867, the woodcuts of Japanese-Canadian artist Naoko Matsubara, and the production and reception in the 1920s of Arthur Heming's paintings of the Canadian fur trade. Other original research is oriented to small exhibits, with a view to future publications: nineteenth-century women's art, twentieth-century commercial illustration, and twenty-first-century photography of historic sites using early photographic techniques and equipment. Her course, "Collecting Canada," based on the ROM Canadian collections, is offered through the University of Toronto's Department of Fine Art.

Gehmacher came to study Kane first through her acquisition for the ROM of the chromolithograph "Death of Omoosisixany or Big Snake" for the Canadiana collection. Her research interests in Kane have expanded to include *Wanderings of an Artist*, including its critical reception outside the English-speaking world, with additional focus on the artist's works on paper and Kane's possible use of the camera lucida.



**"Paul Kane has long been an icon of Canadian historical art. I discovered the challenges his legacy presents to curators when I arrived at the Royal Ontario Museum in 2000 to find his paintings and sketches of Aboriginal life under the purview of the Anthropology Department, and the rest of his work in Canadiana. I have since found it fascinating to seek out the keys to conceptually integrate his adventuresome life, his times, and his full artistic output across his entire career."**





## COPYRIGHT & CREDITS

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

#### From the Author

Thanks to my colleagues at the Royal Ontario Museum: Kenneth Lister (Anthropology), Heidi Sobol and Janet Cowan (Conservation), and Mary Allodi (Canadiana), all of whom were sounding boards about Kane. Ken's research on Kane can only be described as inspiring. Priyanka Vaid at the Glenbow Museum, Jacques Des Rochers at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Debra Antoncic at the RiverBrink Museum, and Charlie Hill at the National Gallery of Canada kindly responded to specific inquiries. Special thanks to David Passmore, always insightful. I could not have asked for a better editorial team than that of the ACI.

#### From the Art Canada Institute

This online art book was made possible thanks to BMO Financial Group, the Lead Sponsor of the 2014-15 Season of the Canadian Online Art Book Project. Much gratitude goes to The McLean Foundation, the title sponsor for *Paul Kane: Life & Work*, as well as the other sponsors for the 2014-15 Season: Aimia; Gluskin Sheff + Associates Inc.; The Hal Jackman Foundation; Phyllis Lambert; TD Bank Group; the Toronto Friends of the Visual Arts; and the Harold Town Estate.

Thanks also to the Art Canada Institute Founding Patrons: Sara and Michael Angel, Jalynn H. Bennett, The Butterfield Family Foundation, David and Vivian Campbell, Albert E. Cummings, Kiki and Ian Delaney, The Fleck Family, Roger and Kevin Garland, Michelle Koerner and Kevin Doyle, Phil Lind, Sarah and Tom Milroy, Charles Pachter, Gerald Sheff and Shanitha Kachan, Sandra L. Simpson, and Robin and David Young; as well as its Founding Partner Patrons: The Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation and Partners in Art.

The ACI gratefully acknowledges the support and assistance of the Art Gallery of Ontario (Jim Shedden and Ebony Jansen), the Cobourg Public Library (Heather Viscount), Library and Archives Canada, Andrew Liptak, the National Gallery of Canada (Kristin Rothschild and Leah Resnick), RiverBrink Art Museum (Debra Antoncic), Royal Ontario Museum (Nicola Woods), and the Stark Museum of Art (Alicia Benitez-Booker).

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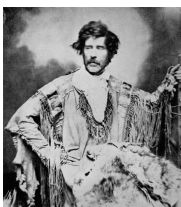
### Credit for Cover Image



Paul Kane, *Cunnawa-bum*, Metis (Plains Cree and British ancestry), c. 1849–56. (See below for details.)

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### Credits for Banner Images



Biography: Paul Kane c. 1850, photographer unknown. M.O. Hammond Collection, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



Key Works: Paul Kane, *The Buffalo Pound*, c. 1846–49. (See below for details.)



Significance & Critical Issues: Paul Kane, *Medicine Pipe Stem Dance*, Blackfoot, c. 1849–52. (See below for details.)





Style & Technique: Paul Kane, *Half Breeds Travelling*, Plains Metis, c. 1849–56. (See below for details.)



Sources & Resources: Canada Envelope Company commemorative Paul Kane mailer, 1971. Photo courtesy of Andrew Liptak.



Where to See: View of Paul Kane paintings in the Daphne Cockwell Gallery of Canada: First Peoples, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. (See below for details.)

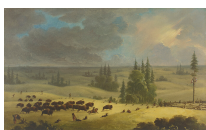
## Credits for Works by Paul Kane



*Assiniboine Hunting Buffalo*, c. 1851–56. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, transfer from the Parliament of Canada, 1955 (6920). Photo © NGC.



*Buffalo Hunt Studies*, 1846. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (946.15.103.1).



*The Buffalo Pound*, c. 1846–49. Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (103720).



*The Cackabakah Falls*, c. 1849–56. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, The Honourable George William Allan Collection, Daphne Cockwell Gallery of Canada: First Peoples, Gift of Sir Edmund Osler (912.1.17).



*Compositional Studies of Four Figures with Fans*, c. 1846–48. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (946.15.79.2).



*The Constant Sky, Saulteaux*, c. 1849-56. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, The Honourable George William Allan Collection, Gift of Sir Edmund Osler (912.1.30).



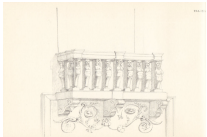
*Culchillum Wearing a Medicine Cap*, 1847. Stark Museum of Art, Orange, Texas (31.78.108).



*Cunnawa-bum, Metis (Plains Cree and British ancestry)*, c. 1849-56. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, The Honourable George William Allan Collection, Gift of Sir Edmund Osler (912.1.41).



*The Death of Omoxisisixany or Big Snake*, 1860. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (2010.17.1).



*Detail of Scroll and Caryatids*, c. 1841. In Paul Kane and E.S. Rogers, *Paul Kane Sketch Pad* (Toronto: Charles J. Musson, 1969).



*Eliza Clarke Cory Clench*, c. 1834-36. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (30487). Photo © NGC.



*Encampment amongst the Islands of Lake Huron*, 1859 (woodcut illustration from Paul Kane, *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America*). Photo courtesy of Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.



*Encampment with Conical Shaped Lodges and Canoe*, 1845. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (946.15.37).





*Falls of Pelouse*, 1847. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (946.15.187).



*Flat Head Woman and Child*, *Caw-wacham*, Cowlitz, c. 1849-52. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, The Honourable George William Allan Collection, Gift of Sir Edmund Osler (912.1.80).



*Fort Edmonton*, Hudson's Bay Company; Plains Cree, Assiniboine, c. 1849-56. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, The Honourable George William Allan Collection, Daphne Cockwell Gallery of Canada: First Peoples, Gift of Sir Edmund Osler (912.1.27).



*François Lucie*, *A Cree Half-Breed Guide*, c. 1847-48. Stark Museum of Art, Orange, Texas (31.78.147).



*Freeman Schermerhorn Clench*, c. 1834-36. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (30486). Photo © NGC.



*Half Breeds Travelling*, Plains Metis, c. 1849-56. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, The Honourable George William Allan Collection, Gift of Sir Edmund Osler (912.1.24).



*Head Chief of the Assiniboines*, (*Portrait of Mah-min*), Assiniboine, c. 1849-56. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, The Honourable George William Allan Collection, Gift of Sir Edmund Osler (912.1.59).



*Indian Encampment on Lake Huron*, c. 1845. Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (3597).



Kee-akee-ka-saa-ka-wow, *"The Man That Gives the War Whoop,"* Plains Cree, Fort Pitt, 1846. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, accession no. 1981-55-44, acquired with the assistance of a grant from the Minister of Communications under the terms of the Cultural Property Export and Import Act.



Kee-akee-ka-saa-ka-wow, (*"The Man That Gives the War Whoop, Head Chief of the Crees"*), Plains Cree, c. 1849-56. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, The Honourable George William Allan Collection, Daphne Cockwell Gallery of Canada: First Peoples, Gift of Sir Edmund Osler (912.1.42).



Leonardo da Vinci, c. 1842. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, bequest of R.A.V. Nicholson, Ottawa, 1965 (14705). Photo © NGC.



Lower Falls on the Pelouse River, 1847. Stark Museum of Art, Orange, Texas (31.78.49).



The Man That Always Rides, Blackfoot, c. 1849-56. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, The Honourable George William Allan Collection, Daphne Cockwell Gallery of Canada: First Peoples, Gift of Sir Edmund Osler (912.1.44).



Maydoc-game-kinungee, *"I Hear the Noise of a Deer,"* Ojibway Chief, Michipicoten Island, September 1848. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, accession no. 1981-55-51, acquired with the assistance of a grant from the Minister of Communications under the terms of the Cultural Property Export and Import Act.





*Medicine Pipe Stem Dance*, 1848. Stark Museum of Art, Orange, Texas (31.78.148).



*Medicine Pipe Stem Dance*, Blackfoot, c. 1849-52. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, The Honourable George William Allan Collection, Gift of Sir Edmund Osler (912.1.56).



*Nesperces Indian*, Nez Perce, c. 1849-56. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, The Honourable George William Allan Collection, Gift of Sir Edmund Osler (912.1.72).



*Portrait of a Half-Breed Cree Girl*, 1859 (frontispiece to Paul Kane, *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America*). Photo courtesy of Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.



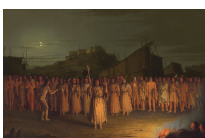
*Portrait of Mrs. Conger of Cobourg*, c. 1834. Samuel E. Weir Collection, RiverBrink Art Museum, Queenston, Ontario (982.81).



*A Prairie on Fire*, c. 1849-56. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, The Honourable George William Allan Collection, Gift of Sir Edmund Osler (912.1.39).



*Running Buffalo*, Assiniboine, c. 1849-56. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, The Honourable George William Allan Collection, Gift of Sir Edmund Osler (912.1.46).



*Scalp Dance*, Colville, Colville (Interior Salish), c. 1849-56. Royal Ontario Museum, The Honourable George William Allan Collection, Gift of Sir Edmund Osler (912.1.66).



*Scene in the Northwest—Portrait of John Henry Lefroy, c. 1845–46.* Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (103828).



*Self-Portrait, c. 1843–45.* Samuel E. Weir Collection, RiverBrink Art Museum, Queenston, Ontario (982.175).



*Six Black Feet Chiefs, Blackfoot, c. 1849–55.* Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, The Honourable George William Allan Collection, Gift of Sir Edmund Osler (912.1.50).



*White Mud Portage, 1859 (chromolithograph from Paul Kane, Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America).* Photo courtesy of Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.

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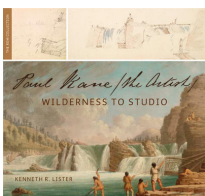
*Buffalo Hunt on the Southwestern Prairies, 1845, by John Mix Stanley.* Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C., Gift of the Misses Henry (1985.66.248,932).



*A Country Tavern near Cobourg, Canada West, 1849, by Harriet Clench.* Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, purchase with assistance from Wintario, 1980 (79/317).

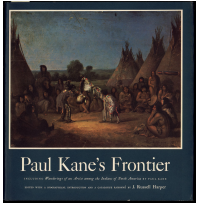


Fringe, possibly for a dress, possibly Plains Cree, collected by Kane c. 1845. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, gift of James and Elaine Slater and their four children, Michael, Kenneth, Lisa, and Abigail (987.197.1).





Front cover of *Paul Kane, the Artist: Wilderness to Studio* by Kenneth Lister (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 2010).



Front cover of *Paul Kane's Frontier: Including Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America by Paul Kane* by J. Russell Harper (Austin: University of Texas Press for Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth; and National Gallery of Canada, 1971).



Frontispiece of Paul Kane, *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America, from Canada to Vancouver's Island and Oregon through the Hudson's Bay Company's Territory and Back Again* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1859). Photo courtesy of Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.



George Catlin, c. 1868, photographer unknown. George Catlin papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (Digital ID: 1601).



George Catlin's Indian Gallery paintings and Native American dioramas installed at the United States National Museum, Washington, D.C., c. 1901. The Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C. (78-3843).



George William Allan, photographed by William James Topley, Ottawa, February 1881. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Topley Studio / Library and Archives Canada / PA-026670.



*Harlech Castle in Merioneth Shire with Snowdon at a Distance*, 1776, by Paul Sandby. National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.



Harriet Clench, c. 1870, photographer unknown. Cobourg and District Images, Cobourg, Ontario.



*Heads of Clatsop Indians*, c. 1804–6, by William Clark. From *Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition 1804–1806*, volume 4 (New York: Dodd, Mead, & Company, 1905). Photo courtesy of American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia.



Illustration of an artist using a camera lucida. In *Dictionnaire encyclopédique et biographique de l'industrie et des arts industriels* (Paris: Librairie des dictionnaires, 1882).



Illustration of the camera lucida, from George Dollond's *Description of the Camera Lucida: An Instrument for Drawing in True Perspective, and for Copying, Reducing, or Enlarging Other Drawings ...* (London, 1830). Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.



*Map to Illustrate Mr. Kane's Travels [1845–48] in the Territory of the Hudson's Bay Company*, published in 1859, by Edward Weller and Paul Kane. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.



Newspaper portrait of the late Paul Kane, published in *Canadian Illustrated News*, October 28, 1871. Cobourg and District Images, Cobourg, Ontario.



*An Officer of the Chasseurs Commanding a Charge*, 1812, by Théodore Géricault. Musée du Louvre, Paris (4885).



Paul Kane's studio sketch box, used between 1820 and 1860. Photo courtesy of National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



Paul Kane's tombstone in St. James Cemetery, Toronto. Photo courtesy of the author.



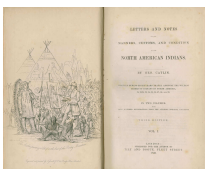
Round rattle, Northwest Coast, British Columbia, collected by Kane in 1847. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, gift of Raymond A. Willis in memory of his mother, "Chelsea," daughter of Allan Cassels and granddaughter of the Honourable G.W. Allan (946.81.2).



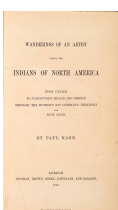
Shoulder bag, Cree or Metis, 1840s. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, purchased by the Royal Ontario Museum with the assistance of a Moveable Cultural Property grant accorded by the Minister of Canadian Heritage under the terms of the Cultural Property Export and Import Act, and through the generous support of the Carolyn Sifton Foundation Inc. (989.61.1).



*The Start of the Race of the Riderless Horses*, c. 1820, by Horace Vernet, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Catharine Lorillard Wolfe Collection, bequest of Catharine Lorillard Wolfe, 1887 (87.15.47).



Title page of George Catlin's *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indian* (London: Tilt & Bogue, 1842). The Newberry Library, Chicago.



Title page of Paul Kane, *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America, from Canada to Vancouver's Island and Oregon through the Hudson's Bay Company's Territory and Back Again* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1859). Photo courtesy of Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.





# PAUL KANE

Life & Work by Arlene Gehmacher

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View of Paul Kane paintings in the Daphne Cockwell Gallery of Canada: First Peoples, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. Photo by Brian Boyle.



*Wahk-ta-Ge-Li, a Sioux Warrior, 1844*, by Karl Bodmer. Private collection.



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ISBN 978-1-4871-0032-2

Art Canada Institute  
Massey College, University of Toronto  
4 Devonshire Place  
Toronto, ON M5S 2E1

## Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Gehmacher, Arlene, 1957-, author  
Paul Kane : life & work / Arlene Gehmacher.

Includes bibliographical references.

Contents: Biography – Key works – Significance & critical issues – Style & technique – Sources & resources – Where to see.

Electronic monograph.

ISBN 978-1-4871-0034-6 (pdf).—ISBN 978-1-4871-0036-0 (epub)

1. Kane, Paul, 1810-1871. 2. Kane, Paul, 1810-1871—Criticism and interpretation. 3. Painters—Canada—Biography. I. Art Canada Institute, issuing body II. Title.

ND249.K3G46 2014

759.11

C2014-905582-X